Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 289

Stéphanie Anthonioz / Alice Mouton /
Daniel Petit (eds)

When Gods Speak to Men

Divine Speech according to Textual Sources in the Ancient Mediterranean Basin

PEETERS

WHEN GODS SPEAK TO MEN

ORBIS BIBLICUS ET ORIENTALIS

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As with all scientific endeavours, this volume experienced a long germination period starting with a seminar first held in Paris during the academic years 2015 and 2016 up to a final symposium organized in Lille, in "La maison des chercheurs" on the 14th and 15th of June 2018. The aim of the seminar was to discuss the ways divine speech is articulated in ancient sources, this articulation encompassing the modalities of language and script, the material medium used to convey the message, and the literary but also socio-historical contexts. The subject was found suggestive enough to organize an international symposium. It was the aim of this symposium to bring together specialists from different fields of the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean basin, history, religion, epigraphy, linguistics, to analyse divine speech as it is articulated and mediated and to witness to the status of divine speech in special relation to the literary and material forms it takes and eventually the changes that could be pointed to over the centuries. Though some aspects of the research had already been the object of various studies, the question of the relation between language, genre, script and medium in preserving divine speech revealed itself innovative. In other words, what is the connection between divine speech and the materiality of its preservation, whether linguistic, literary or concrete? And does this connection modify the nature of divine speech?

The realization of the final symposium was made possible thanks to the collaboration of researchers Stéphanie Anthonioz, Alice Mouton and Daniel Petit and their institutions, the Catholic University of Lille with its "Fonds fédératifs pour la recherche," the CNRS with the help of the team "Mondes sémitiques" (UMR 8167 "Orient et Méditerranée"), the University of the Sorbonne with the "École doctorale 'Mondes anciens et médiévaux'" and the "Fonds d'intervention pour la recherche" (FIR), and finally Labex TransferS from the École Normale Supérieure.

ABBREVIATIONS

AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
ANEM	Ancient Near East Monographs
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ARM	Archives royales de Mari
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*
BIFAO	*Le Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale*
BiOr	*Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
CHD	The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
CID 2	*Corpus des inscriptions de Delphes. Tome II, Les comptes du quatrième et du troisième siècle*, J. BOUSQUET, Paris: De Boccard, 1989
CTH	Catalogue des Textes Hittites
DMOA	Documenta et monumenta Orientis antiqui
ERC	Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations
FD III, 2	*Fouilles de Delphes. Tome III, Épigraphie. Deuxième fascicule, avec planches. Inscriptions du trésor des Athéniens*, G. COLIN, Paris: Fontemoing & Cie, 1909
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GMTR	Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HED	Hittite Etymological Dictionary, J. PUHVEL, Berlin-New York: Mouton (Trends in Linguistics 1–), 1984–
HEG	Hethitisches Etymologisches Glossar
HeBAI	*Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IFAO	Institut français d'archéologie orientale
IG IX,2	*Inscriptiones Graecae. Volumen IX, Inscriptiones Graeciae septentrionalis: voluminibus VII et VIII non comprehensae. Pars secunda, Inscriptiones Thessaliae* ed. O. KERN, Berlin: G. Reimerum, 1908
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JRA	*Journal of Roman Archaeology*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*

KBo	Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi
KUB	Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi
LAPO	Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient
LSG	*Lois sacrées des cités grecques*, F. SOKOLOWSKI, Paris: De Boccard, 1969
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
PUF	Presses Universitaires de France
RINAP	Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SANER	Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, Amsterdam: Gieben, 1923–
SJSJ	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
STJD	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
Syll.^{3}	*Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum*, W. DITTENBERGER, Leipzig: S. Hirzelium, 1915–1921
TSAJ	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
TTKY	Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları(ndan)
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
ZAH	*Zeitschrift für Althebraistik*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

WHEN GODS SPEAK TO MEN: DIVINE SPEECH ACCORDING TO TEXTUAL SOURCES IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN BASIN. INTRODUCTION

Stéphanie Anthonioz[*], Alice Mouton[**], and Daniel Petit[***]

The way men seek divine words in Antiquity has often been studied through their prayers and rituals, whether they look for words of encouragement or need to acquire some knowledge about a decision to take or an event to come.[1] However, the way divine speech is articulated and mediated has seldom been studied in a comparative approach, that is to say the literary form it takes (narratives, letters, inscriptions, annals), the medium through which it is understood (dreams, oracles, prophecy or any other divinatory form), but also the medium upon which it is inscribed (tablets, leather or papyri, monumental inscriptions), since it is only through this materiality that we modern readers may learn about it. Literary and divinatory forms are therefore in this volume of special interest as much as the documents and materials that are used, to convey them.

Divine speech is a recurring motif in a number of cultures, by no means restricted to the Ancient Mediterranean Basin. But considering the close cultural relationships of the societies documented in this region, it was deemed stimulating to study divine speech as a particular form of orality in a comparative perspective, the ways it is articulated and mediated. As there are significant differences in the various stages of historical development between these cul-

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[**] CNRS UMR 8167 Paris.
[***] ENS and EPHE Paris. Our thanks go to Judith Remy for improving our English.
[1] See, for example, M. W. BROIDA, "Ritualization in Prophetic Intercession," *Prophecy and its Cultic Dimensions*, L.-S. Tiemeyer (ed.), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019, 17–37; M. NISSINEN, "The Ritual Aspect of Prophecy," *Prophecy and its Cultic Dimensions*, L.-S. Tiemeyer (ed.), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019, 101–114; A. LENZI, "Revisiting Biblical Prophecy, Revealed Knowledge Pertaining to Ritual, and Secrecy in Light of Ancient Mesopotamian Prophetic Texts," in *Divination, Politics, and Ancient Near Eastern Empires*, A. Lenzi, J. Stökl (eds), Atlanta: SBL, 2014, 65–86; J. W. HILBER, "Royal Cultic Prophecy in Assyria, Judah, and Egypt," in *'Thus Speaks Ishtar of Arbela': Prophecy in Israel, Assyria, and Egypt in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, R. P. Gordon, H. M. Barstad (eds), Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013, 161–186; M. NISSINEN, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, Atlanta: SBL (Writings from the Ancient World 12), 2003. For primary sources, see for example M. NISSINEN, *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017; A. MOUTON, *Rituels, mythes et prières hittites*, Paris: Cerf (LAPO 21), 2016; S. PARPOLA, *Assyrian Prophecies*, Helsinki: Helsinki University Press (SAA 9), 1997.

tures as well as within one single society, it was not expected to find complete similarity in the ways divine speech is presented and described in all documented evidence. Moreover, the ways divine speech is represented obliged us to take a broad stand and consider it as language, but also as genre, and to consider writing in its graphic and orthographic forms, and in its artefacts. In this volume, three areas are better explored, language with the question of a particular divine language, genre and the ways divine speech is expressed and contextualized, and finally materiality or the function of the medium to convey the divine message. Associated with all these areas and the last one in particular is the question of human authority in articulating divine speech.

1. DIVINE LANGUAGE

To contextualize the matter further, let us begin by a quotation showing how divine speech was conceived by one of the leading figures of the early Christian Church. In the Second Homily of his *Hexaemeron*, Basil of Caesarea, better known by the name of Saint Basil the Great (329-379), paraphrased the creation of the world according to the book of Genesis, pointing out that God gave names to all things but did not speak like human beings in order to do so. Basil described this idea as follows:

> When we speak of the voice, of the word, of the command of God, we do not consider this divine language to be a sound which escapes from the organs of speech, a collision of air struck by the tongue, but we think that this simple sign of the will of God was designed in the form of an order to impress the souls whom we instruct.[2]

It is difficult to determine with precision what this quotation refers to. Two different interpretations have been suggested, depending on whether it refers to God's language seen as a linguistic system structured in a different way from human language or to God's speech seen as a specific performance in a limited context of utterance using different channels from human beings. The use of the verb σχηματίζεσθαι "to be designed, to take shape" seems to suggest that God's language is fundamentally different from human language in its physical production and can be compared with it only metaphorically. In other words, God's language is not presented as a physical reality, but as a reality constructed by discourse. If we take this quotation in reference to divine speech as a

[2] Ὅταν δὲ φωνὴν ἐπὶ Θεοῦ καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ πρόσταγμα λέγωμεν, οὐ διὰ φωνητικῶν ὀργάνων ἐκπεμπόμενον ψόφον, οὐδὲ ἀέρα διὰ γλώσσης τυπούμενον, τὸν θεῖον λόγον νοοῦμεν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ θελήματι ῥοπὴν διὰ τὸ τοῖς διδασκομένοις εὐσύνοπτον ἡγούμεθα ἐν εἴδει προστάγματος σχηματίζεσθαι. BASIL OF CAESAREA, *Hexaemeron* II 7 (387), in *Basile de Césarée, Homélies sur l'Hexaéméron*, S. Giet (ed.), Paris: Cerf (Sources Chrétiennes), 1968.

specific form of expression, the question is: what makes God's speaking so peculiar and so radically different from human speech?

The idea that divine language and speech are different from human language and speech may have left traces in different cultures in Antiquity. The most striking example is the description of a language of gods consisting of a radically different lexicon from the language of men, as we can observe in Homeric Greek and is abundantly expounded in C. Le Feuvre's contribution. This specificity was considered striking, and we know for example that the Greek orator, Dio Chrysostom, writing in the first century CE, took it as a proof that Homer was an unmitigated liar:

> And to all this Homer has just added the finishing touch. For, not to keep us in doubt as to how he came to understand the gods, he talks to us almost as though he were acquainted with their language, tells us that it was not the same as ours, and that they do not apply the same names to the various things as we do. He draws attention to this in the case of a bird, which he says the gods call *chalkis* and men *kymindis*, and in the case of a place before Troy which men call *Batieia*, but the gods call the same *Myrines*. And after telling us that the river is called not *Scamander* but *Xanthus* by the gods, Homer himself proceeds to call it by this latter name in his verses, as though it were his privilege not only to mix the various dialectal forms of the Greeks freely, using now the Aeolic, now a Dorian, and now an Ionic form, but to employ even the Zeus dialect in the bargain. I have spoken in this way just as I have said, not by way of criticism, but because Homer was the boldest liar in existence and showed no less assurance and pride in his lying than in telling the truth.[3]

No matter to what extent Homer may be considered reliable, the notion of a specific language of the gods remains rather rare in the Ancient Mediterranean Basin, even though partial precedent of the passage just quoted exist here and there, such as maybe in a Hattic-Hittite bilingual text, where we read:

---

[3] Τούτοις δὲ ἐπέθηκε τὸν κολοφῶνα σχεδόν· ἵνα γὰρ μὴ ἀπορῶμεν ὅπως ξυνίει τῶν θεῶν, οὕτως διαλέγεται ἡμῖν σχεδὸν ὡς ἔμπειρος τῆς τῶν θεῶν γλώττης, καὶ ὅτι οὐχ ἡ αὐτή ἐστι τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ οὐδὲ τὰ αὐτὰ ὀνόματα ἐφ᾽ ἑκάστῳ λέγουσιν ἅπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς. ἐνδείκνυται δὲ ταῦτα ἐπὶ ὀρνέου τινός, ὅ φησι τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς χαλκίδα καλεῖν, τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους κύμινδιν, καὶ ἐπὶ τόπου τινὸς πρὸς τῆς πόλεως, ὃν τοὺς μὲν ἀνθρώπους Βατίειαν ὀνομάζειν, τοὺς δὲ θεοὺς Σῆμα Μυρίνης. περὶ δὲ τοῦ ποταμοῦ φράσας ἡμῖν ὅτι οὐ Σκάμανδρος, ἀλλὰ Ξάνθος λέγοιτο παρὰ τοῖς θεοῖς, αὐτὸς οὕτως ἤδη ἐν τοῖς ἔπεσιν ὀνομάζει, ὡς οὐ μόνον ἐξὸν αὐτῷ τὰς ἄλλας γλώττας μιγνύειν τὰς τῶν Ἑλλήνων, καὶ ποτὲ μὲν αἰολίζειν, ποτὲ δὲ δωρίζειν, ποτὲ δὲ ἰάζειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ διαστὶ διαλέγεσθαι. ταῦτα δέ μοι εἴρηται, ὥσπερ δὴ ἔφην, οὐ κατηγορίας ἕνεκεν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι ἀνδρειότατος ἀνθρώπων ἦν πρὸς τὸ ψεῦδος Ὅμηρος καὶ οὐθὲν ἧττον ἐθάρρει καὶ ἐσεμνύνετο ἐπὶ τῷ ψεύδεσθαι ἢ τῷ τἀληθῆ λέγειν. DIO CHRYSOSTOM, *Discourse on the Trojan War*, 11, 22, in G. Vagnone (ed.), *Dione di Prusa, Troiano (Or. XI)*, Roma: Edizioni dell' Ateneo, 2003.

> [When the prince conjures to the concubine of the Storm God, the musician says]: To mankind (you are) Tašimmeti, but among the gods you (are) Anzili the queen.[4]

Just like in Dio Chrysostom's passage, this extract may refer to the existence of two competing names for one and the same living being: one name being used by man, the other by gods. Although this cannot be taken as an illustration of a whole language of the gods in opposition to that of men, it reflects a linguistic separation between the two groups. This text, which repeats this formula and similar ones several times, illustrates a scholarly discourse on divine *interpretatio*: the gods themselves are responsible for the equivalences established. The language of gods, whenever attested, does not only separate divine and human worlds from a linguistic point of view, but gives the opportunity of getting access to the former through a set of lexical equivalences.

The question whether this idea is proper to Indo-European or goes back to some Near Eastern source may be debated. Is it possible, for example, that the very ancient poetic device of parallelism in Semitic languages is connected to such a conception of divine speech? Is not poetry indeed of divine origin? And is it possible that this distinction is at the heart of the second creation narrative in the book of Genesis, when man is summoned to call out things by their name (Gen 2:19-20), as if to infer that human language was not the same as divine language, though of course, man and the deity do understand each other? This may sound very suggestive but may not so far have been demonstrated.

2. Signs and literary genres

Most of the time, men and gods communicate with each other without a language barrier. However, they rarely communicate directly. Prayers, rituals, oracles are different forms of this interaction, from men to gods or from gods to men, and we might even be tempted to say that religion is essentially a conversation between men and gods. This is all the more evident when one considers the contrary notion of a silent god. In several ancient cultures of the Mediterranean Basin, such a phenomenon is the sign of a severe crisis in that communication has been disrupted. An illustration of this occurs in Job 30: "I cry to you for help and you do not answer me" (30:20a). Analogous motifs can be found in cuneiform sources, such as in the Hittite prayers quoted in A. Mouton's and A. Gilan's contributions, where disruption in the dialogue between the gods and their mortal servants occurs: first, men need to find out the reason

[4] KUB 8.41 ii 7'-13' (CTH 733): *dandukišni Tašimmetiš* DINGIR^{MEŠ}*-naš=a ištarna* ^{D}*IŠTAR-iš* MUNUS.LUGAL*-aš zik*.

for the divine wrath, then they have to soothe it through rituals, prayers and "briberies" (food, drinks, fancy offerings). Such are the basics of *religio*, i.e. the bond which is tied between gods and men. Gods "talk" when they are pleased with their human servants. Indeed, a Hittite instruction text states:

> (Are) the mind of a person and (that) of the deities somehow different? No! (And) in regard to this very (matter)? No! (Their) mind (is) indeed one and the same. When a servant stands before his master, he (is) washed and he has put on pure (clothes). Either he gives him (something) to eat or he gives him (something) to drink. And since that one, i.e. his master, eats (and) drinks, his mind (is) relaxed, so that he is bound (i.e. obliged) to him.[5]

Hence divine speech is closely connected with service through ritual and divination. Divine speech is not only about language but also about signs, which become intelligible through interpretation, language and writing. We only have to think of concepts such as "tablet of destinies" or "heavenly tablet,"[6] or the assertion of king Assurbanipal to know the "gods' signs," "signs of heaven and earth," signs "from before the flood."[7] Divine speech is therefore a complex construction. One example of this is found in the Epic of Zimri-Lim, a highly poetical text celebrating the military success of the famous king of Mari on the Euphrates, who reigned during the XVIIIth c. BCE:

> The prince of the land saw his sign, the prophet/*āpilum*,
> the courage of the king grows eminently.[8]

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[5] KUB 13.4 i 21'-26' and duplicates in J. MILLER, *Hittite Royal Instructions and Related Administrative Texts*, Atlanta: SBL (Writings from the Ancient World 31), 2013, 248–249: UN-*aš* DINGIR^{MEŠ}-*aš=(š)a* ZI-*anza tamāiš kuiški UL kī=pat kuit UL* ZI-*anza=ma* 1-*aš=pat* ÌR=*ŠU kuwapi ANA* EN=*ŠU peran šarā artari n=aš warpanza nu parkuwaya waššan harzi nu=(š)ši naššu adanna peškezzi našma=(š)ši akuwanna peškezzi nu=za apāš* EN=*ŠU azzikkezzi akkuškezzi kuit n=aš* ZI-*an arha lānza n=at=ši=kan anda damenkišketta.*

[6] For example, G. SELZ, "The Tablet with 'Heavenly Writing,' or How to Become a Star," in *Non licet stare caelestibus: Studies on Astronomy and its History offered to Salvo De Meis*, A. Panaino *et al*. (eds), MIMESIS Milano – Udine, 2014, 51–67.

[7] See A. LIVINGSTONE, "Ashurbanipal: literate or not?," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 97 (2007): 98–118.

[8] *i-mu-ur-ma it-ta-šu a-pí-la-am e-te-e$_9$-él ma-ti-š[u] lugal li-ib-ba-šu da-na-na-am uṣ-ba-am*, "il vit son 'signe', -(par) un prophète-, le prince de son Pays et, le roi, son cœur/courage, -en force-s'accrut" (iii 35-36). M. GUICHARD, *Florilegium marianum XIV, L'épopée de Zimrī-Lîm*, Paris: SEPOA (Mémoires de NABU 16), 2014; *id*., "L'apparition d'un prophète anonyme dans un poème épique paléo-babylonien," in *Comment devient-on prophète ? Actes du colloque organisé par le Collège de France, Paris, les 4-5 avril 2011*, J.-M. Durand *et al*. (eds), Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014, 39. English translation from M. NISSINEN, *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives*, Oxford: University Press, 2017, 105.

As noted by M. Nissinen, the syntactical position of the word *āpilum* may be interpreted in two different ways: either the prophet himself appears as the sign, or the sign comes through the mouth of the prophet. In this last sense, the message is the sign, so the prophecy will allow Zimri-Lim to prepare for his last combat. What is then heard and quoted literarily in the poem shares many features with Neo-Assyrian and biblical oracles, where the gods/God stand(s) at the right and left sides of the protected king or mediator. Clearly if gods speak, their language is shared with men through signs, which need to be converted into a meaningful message. Signs as well as literary genres are at the heart of such construction. This point, we may say, is common to all contributions in this volume.

In Egypt, as demonstrated by D. Lefèvre, the language associated with hieroglyphic writing was thought to be of divine origin, divine speech itself.[9] In this case, the written sign is the very message; a theory that has also been defended for Mesopotamian cuneiform.[10] In both cases, it must be argued that the identification of the sign with the message can only be understood in a symbolical way as no one would grasp the sign without a long scribal training. The sign is clearly not the referent itself but the value it is given through its wording, thus giving incredible authority to scribes. This wording, as demonstrated by R. Loriol, may be understood as pre-interpretation and persuasion because it influences a potential interpretation. And as texts constitute the only vestige from divine speeches all over Antiquity, close attention must be paid to genre, style and rhetoric as they reveal as much as, if not more than the content itself.

It is true that the notion of genre in Antiquity has recently been, and in various domains, much criticized.[11] However, for our purpose and in an etic and not emic perspective, literary genres should be considered as a deliberate construct, a tool of communication and an aid to understanding.[12] This is exempli-

[9] This conception seems to have continued even when hieroglyphic writing evolved into a cursive form.

[10] D. Katz reconsidering the famous plot between Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta remarked: "The advantage of the cuneiform scripts is that the sign itself is the message, and therefore the recipient can understand it without having previous training. On the level of the plot, equating a single sign with the message has an ideological value, which is the advantage of the logographic cuneiform signs." D. KATZ, "Ups and Downs in the Career of Enmerkar king of Uruk," in *Fortune and Misfortune in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 60th RAI at Warsaw, 21-25 2014*, O. Drewnowska, M. Sandowicz (eds), Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2017, 204.

[11] See, for example, W. KYNES, "The 'Wisdom Literature' Category: An Obituary," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 69 (2018): 1–24; H. NAJMAN *et al*. (eds), *Tracing Sapiential Traditions in Ancient Judaism*, Leiden: Brill (SJSJ 174), 2016; M. R. SNEED (ed.), *Was There a Wisdom Tradition?: New Prospects in Israelite Wisdom Studies*, Atlanta: SBL Press (SBL.AIL 23), 2015.

[12] M. NISSINEN, *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives*, 57, proposes six prophetical genres: "Classes 1–3 [(1) lexical lists and omen texts, (2) administrative texts, (3) ritual texts] are almost exclusively represented by Mesopotamian sources and consist of texts that do not give an account of prophetic messages but help to locate prophets and their activities in

fied by several contributions in this volume. Regarding ancient Egyptian sources, D. Lefèvre shows how divine speech is contextualized through writing: in funerary texts, gods speak to deceased people; in myth, to fictional people; in rituals, to a king or a priest; gods also speak at night in dreams, to living people (often the king). The question of the contextualization of divine speech and therefore of genre is again preeminent in the Hittite sources, as the contributions of A. Gilan and A. Mouton show. The former explores divine speech in Hittite historiographical texts, whereas the latter concentrates on Hittite dream accounts. Both show that divine speech is a complex articulation, a rhetorical and strategical or ideological construction.

3. MATERIALITY, MEDIA AND SCRIBAL AUTHORITY

However, in Mesopotamian and biblical studies, this literary contextual dimension has often been studied,[13] we therefore found more thought-provoking to investigate another question, rarely taken into account, that of the materialization of divine speech and the importance of artefacts as media.[14] Indeed, the artefact is what connects us with Antiquity. Moreover, when the material object is found in its primary context, it adds to what the literary text does not say. Clearly, at this point, not only the sign but the medium becomes the message, as highlighted in the contributions of M. Nissinen and S. Anthonioz.

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lexical, administrative, and ritual contexts. Classes 4–5 [(4) letters, (5) written prophecy] include texts in which divine words transmitted by prophets are quoted and/or the prophets' goings-on are described in (quasi-)primary sources. Class 6 [literary prophecy] also contains prophetic oracles, references to prophets, and descriptions of their activities in secondary sources such as royal inscriptions, historical narratives, and prophetic books, often with a considerable temporal distance from the described events and phenomena, if not fictitious altogether."

[13] A. LENZI, J. STÖKL (eds), *Divination, Politics, and Ancient Near Eastern Empires*, Atlanta: SBL Press (ANEM 7), 2014; T. RÖMER *et al*. (eds), *Comment devient-on prophète?: Actes du colloque organisé par le Collège de France, Paris, les 4-5 avril 2011*, Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (OBO 265), 2014; M. WEIPPERT, *Götterwort in Menschenmund: Studien zur Prophetie in Assyrien, Israel und Juda*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (FRLANT 252), 2014; J. W. HILBER, "Royal Cultic Prophecy in Assyria, Judah, and Egypt," 161–186; J. STÖKL, *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East: A Philological and Sociological Comparison*, Leiden: Brill (CHANE 56), 2012; D. V. EDELMAN, E. BEN ZVI (eds), *The Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud*, London: Equinox (Bible World), 2009; F. HARTENSTEIN *et al*. (eds), *Schriftprophetie: Festschrift für Jörg Jeremias zum 65. Geburtstag*, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2004; M. NISSINEN, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, Atlanta: SBL (Writings from the Ancient World 12), 2003; J.-G. HEINTZ, *Oracles et prophéties dans l'Antiquité: Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg 15-17 juin 1995*, Paris: Éditions de Boccard (Travaux du Centre de Recherche sur le Proche-Orient et la Grèce Antiques 15), 1997.

[14] See, for example, T. E. BALKE, C. TSOUPAROPOULOU (eds), *Materiality of Writing in Early Mesopotamia*, Berlin: de Gruyter (Materiale Textkulturen 13), 2016.

Two other related matters come to the fore when taking into account the materialization of divine speech: the question of writing in its graphic dimension and that of the scribal role in giving authority to divine speech. The first question has been partly considered with the reflection on Egyptian hieroglyphs. However, if it highlights the general conception of a language thought to be of divine origin, it does not take into account the possibilities that divine speech or divine names could be written down in ways distinguishing them from other textual elements. This was illustrated by C. Roche-Hawley's contribution to our workshop which discussed the existence of some sixty-five tablets written in archaizing cuneiform, demonstrating how scribes did reflect upon the writing of the gods (in this case not the language but the script).[15] Indeed, archaizing Babylonian script was preferred for these lists by a privileged milieu of diviners and scribes to indicate very old, that is divine origin and, at the same time, to display scribal erudition.

Interestingly enough this invites us to reflect upon the scribal milieu or the secretaries as they are called in Greek sources (γραμματεύς in the singular). The orality of oracles in shrines is a well-known feature of Greek divination, specifically discussed by Plutarch in his *Pythic dialogues*, revolving around inspiration and versification.[16] When one reads these dialogues, one might think that the words of the gods are limited to an oral performance recorded only by some historians in search of striking *exempla*. However, this vision of a punctual oral revelation is challenged by a growing mass of written evidence from Hellenistic and Roman times: most of the flourishing oracular shrines took the act of writing down the gods' words very seriously. M. Lescourgues shows that, during the first centuries CE, the increase of institutionalized ways of recording oracles reveals a new interest in their control and diffusion. By analysing the sacred functions and processes of recording the oracles in the oracular shrines, it becomes clear that writing god's words permitted the control of the special divine knowledge formed by these very oracles.

All these aspects in line with past research have opened new and stimulating roads in a comparative approach and have greatly enhanced our understanding of divine speech both in its (historical and literary) contextualization and materialization.

[15] Roche-Hawley's contribution is not enclosed here and will be published in a separate volume, *Babylonian Ceremonial Script in its Pedagogical Context*.
[16] Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis*, 402D-405D; *De defectu oraculorum*, 431A-438D.

WHEN EGYPTIAN GODS SPEAK: DIVINE DISCOURSE IN CONTEXT

Dominique Lefèvre[*]

> *Celui-ci (i.e. Aton) (...) est, à de très rares exceptions près, un dieu muet, en contraste total avec les bavardes divinités d'antan.*[1]

Aside from the main exception described above, Egyptian gods are extremely talkative. For three thousand years they flooded the Nile Valley with their discourse. However, agreement has still to be reached about how to understand "divine speech;" what the gods' means of communication are; what their language is; and how they used it / it was made use of. The term "divine speech" also prompts us to think more deeply about what hieroglyphs represent, these "divine words" (*mdw-nṯr*) which are distinctive features in Egyptian art and which, by the very name, explicitly refer to the world of gods. Different perspectives may be considered. We can focus on the speakers themselves: the deities who talk to each other, but also to men, in particular to the preeminent one: Pharaoh. It is also interesting to examine the different texts in which divine speech appears and to reflect upon the reasons for its very presence in these texts.

Strictly speaking, the ancient Egyptian language doesn't have any specific or technical term which is equivalent to the word "language." The nearest approximation for it in Egyptian would probably be *r*(*ȝ*)[2] or *mdw/md.t.*[3] The former word first refers to the mouth as well as to oral production: what comes out of the mouth.[4] For instance, it can appear in titles of ritual acts or as an incipit of many chapters of the *Book of the Dead,* in a sentence structure which links the word to the indirect genitive followed by the infinitive (in a positive or negative sentence according to the cases). Thus Chapter 53 of *The Book of*

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[*] University of Geneva (Switzerland). I would like to thank Elizabeth Beetles and Emilie Flouret for improving my English.

[1] M. GABOLDE, *Toutânkhamon*, Paris: Pygmalion, 2015, 56. See also E. MEYER-DIETRICH, *Auditive Räume des Alten Ägypten. Die Umgestaltung einer Hörkultur in der Amarnazeit*, Leiden: Brill (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 92), 2018, 465–470.

[2] A. ERMAN, H. GRAPOW (eds), *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1926-1961, II, 391; R. O. FAULKNER, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, Oxford: University Press, 1962, 145.

[3] A. ERMAN, H. GRAPOW (eds), *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, 180–181; R. O. FAULKNER, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 122.

[4] It can also refer to the idea of entrance, beginning.

the Dead opens as follows: "Spell for not eating dung nor drinking urine in the god's domain." In only few cases *r(3)* can be translated by "language" or the word "talking" (see examples below). As for *mdw/md.t,* the term refers to articulated speech more than to syntactic sequences forming sentences – even if, here too, the context can sometimes lead to the word being translated as "language."

All modern ways of analysis which are related to what we call "linguistics" cannot be transferred to the Egyptian way of visualizing the reality of the world.[5] The way Egyptians considered language and writing thus appears very different to our understanding of it. What is more, from an emic point of view, and if we only consider the divine sphere, the gods' communication skills were not just limited to speaking. Other ways of communication existed between the divine and the human world. Deities could send signs to men, a message which had to be read and understood and, if needed, answered in an appropriate way.[6]

To continue with the oral way of communication, ancient Egyptian intellectuals seem to have regarded the Egyptian language as the only "real" human language, in the sense that it was the language of Creation, the only one existing from the "First Time" (*sp tpy*).

From an assessment of our written sources, there is indeed no perceptible difference between the language of men and the language of the gods, neither in its lexicon nor in syntax.[7] But this situation is perhaps misleading: the Egyptians were able to translate the words of the gods into human language in a pragmatic way.[8] Moreover, since Egyptian thought is rarely unequivocal, ancient Egyptians were able to propose other communication methods which highlighted a differentiation between the language of men and gods. Thus, the cries that accompanied the agitation of baboons "greeting" the rising of the solar god Re each morning was perceived, if not as a divine language, at least as a language understood by the gods. Gods could also understand the language

[5] D. MEEKS, *Les Egyptiens et leurs mythes. Appréhender un polythéisme*, Paris: Musée du Louvre, Hazan (La chaire du Louvre), 2018, 194.

[6] For example, the famous instance of the miracle of the gazelle. See *inter alios* E. JAMBON, "Calendrier et prodiges. Remarques sur la divination égyptienne d'après Hérodote II, 82," in *Hérodote et l'Égypte. Regards croisés sur le Livre II de l'Enquête d'Hérodote. Actes de la journée d'étude organisée à la Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée – Lyon, le 10 mai 2010*, Lyon: Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée Jean Pouilloux, 2013, 156–158.

[7] It is usually the textual genre, the expression register that synchronically governs variation in the syntax and vocabulary used. See recently S. POLIS, "Censure de l'écrit et tabous en Égypte pharaonique," *Culture, le magazine culturel en ligne de l'Université de Liège* 1, (2013), available online at the following address: http://culture.uliege.be/jcms/prod_1378460/fr/censure-de-l-ecrit-et-tabous-en-egypte-pharaonique?

[8] D. MEEKS, C. FAVARD-MEEKS, *La vie quotidienne des dieux égyptiens*, Paris: Hachette, 1993, 154–155.

of birds and fish.[9] It is therefore difficult to decide whether or not one can say that there is indeed a specifically divine language. In general, it can be proposed that an inability to understand modes of communication in the earthly environment (such as the songs of birds) could be a sign that they are of divine origin.

The same multitude of explanations for a single phenomenon can be found in the Egyptians' perception of foreign languages. The Egyptians were naturally aware that there were different "human" languages, becoming acquainted with them through their contacts with the populations surrounding Egypt. While in Retenu, a location in the Syrian-Palestinian corridor, the hero of the *Tale of Sinuhe* (Middle Kingdom, 12th Dynasty) can, after spending much time outside his native country, finally have the hope of hearing his mother tongue again when the local prince tells him: "You will be well with me, for you will hear the speech[10] of Egypt."[11]

Still in the fictional register, the anti-hero Wenamon (Third Intermediate Period), in charge of fetching wood from the Levant to build the god Amon's new sacred bark, was wrecked on the island of Cyprus and was desperately seeking an interpreter:

> "Is there no one among you who understands the speech[12] of Egypt?" And one of them replied, "I understand (it)."[13]

Language was therefore an important factor for Egyptians as a unifying cultural entity – distinguishing them from populations speaking other languages.[14]

A firmly held belief was that the Egyptian language was the only language truly effective in honouring the gods and thus implicitly the only "true" human language. Foreign languages were reduced to the rank of gibberish, whose

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[9] P. VERNUS, J. YOYOTTE, *Bestiaire des Pharaons*, Paris: A. Viénot Librairie Perrin, 2005, 25 (*s.v.* "Les animaux hérauts du divin").

[10] *Sinuhe* B31-32. The text uses the word *r(3)*. See R. KOCH, *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe*, Brussels: Éditions de la Fondation Reine Elisabeth (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca XVII), 1990, 24.

[11] W. K. SIMPSON (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt. An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, Third edition, New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2003, 57.

[12] *Wenamun*, 2,77-78. The text uses the word *md.t*. See A. H. GARDINER, *Late Egyptian Stories*, Brussels: Éditions de la Fondation Reine Elisabeth (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca I), 1932, 75.

[13] W. K. SIMPSON (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt. An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 123.

[14] See G. MOERS, "Bei mir wird es Dir gut ergehen, denn du wirst die Sprache Ägyptens hören! Verschieden und doch gleich: Sprache als identitätsrelevanter Faktor im pharaonischen Ägypten," in *Muster und Funktionen kultureller Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung. Beiträge zur internationalen Geschichte der sprachlichen und literarischen Emanzipation*, U.-C. Sander, F. Paul (eds), Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2000, 45–99.

existence was considered to be due to a deficiency in the organs producing speech.[15]

The belief in this physiological aberration is not the only linguistic theory developed by the Egyptians. A more encompassing vision regarded Thoth as the creator of the different languages spoken on earth. In the Amarna period (New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty), the hymn addressed to the god Aten reflects this particular concept:

> How manifold it is, what you have made, although mysterious in the face (of humanity), o sole god, without another beside him! You create the earth according to your wish, being alone – People, all large and small animals, all things which are on earth, which go on legs, which rise up and fly by means of their wings, the foreign countries of Kharu and Kush, (and) the land of Egypt. You set every man in his place, you make their requirements, each one having his food and the reckoning of his lifetime. Their tongues differ in speech, their nature likewise. Their skins are distinct, for you have made foreigners to be distinct.[16]

In the magico-religious field, the stranger can represent what is hostile, and against whom one needs protection, yet when a "strange" language is used, its powerful magic can be used with profit.[17]

Whatever the reality of the language actually spoken by deities, oral speech is fundamental in the context of Egyptian religion because it is one of the main means by which the creative act of the demiurge takes place. The Word is creative, bringing about what is uttered. As our sources are purely in a written format, it is impossible for us to have a precise idea of the actual sound of the language of the gods.[18] In any case, we have to base our understanding on the

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[15] A text dating from the reign of Ramesses III (20th Dynasty) mentioning Libyans settled in Egypt says about them: "They heard the speech (*mdt*) of the men (*i.e.* Egyptians), and he (i.e. the king) made their language (*mdt*) disappear; he turned their tongue." R. LEPSIUS, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopen: nach den Zeichnungen der von Seiner Majestät dem Koenige von Preussen Friedrich Wilhelm IV nach diesen Ländern gesendeten und in den Jahren 1842-1845 ausgeführten wissenschaftlichen Expedition*, Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung, 1849-1859, Abtheilung III, 218c, lines 3-4. This passage is cited by S. SAUNERON, "La différenciation des langages d'après la tradition égyptienne," *BIFAO* 60 (1961): 41. During the roman period, a similar idea can be found in the temple of Esna, see S. SAUNERON, *Les fêtes religieuses d'Esna aux derniers siècles du paganisme*, Le Caire: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1962, 103.

[16] W. J. MURNANE, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, Atlanta: Scholars Press (Writings from the Ancient World 5), 1995, 114.

[17] The efficiency of formulas can be reinforced if they are pronounced in a foreign language. See Y. KOENIG, "La Nubie dans les textes magiques. 'L'inquiétante étrangeté,'" *Revue d'Égyptologie* 38 (1987): 105–110; T. SCHNEIDER, "Mag. pHarris XII, 1-5: Eine kanaanäische Beschwörung für die Löwenjagd," *Göttinger Miszellen* 112 (1989): 53–63; C. LEITZ, *Magical and Medical Papyri of the New Kingdom*, London: British Museum Press (Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, Seventh Series), 1999, 49–50.

[18] The reference to the hum of bees as voice of the gods in the ritual of the goddess Mut (papyrus Berlin 3063, XIII,6-8) doesn't seem clear; see P. DERCHAIN, U. VERHOEVEN, *Le voyage de la*

written sources at our disposal. In this respect, it is necessary to consider the nature of hieroglyphs, a script emblematic of ancient Egypt. Indeed, the very term refers to the divine world. From their Egyptian name, *mdw-nṯr*, "divine words," hieroglyphs are much more than a graphic code that allows statements to be recorded and transmitted as time goes by, a writing that was simply used for practical purposes. It was a speech conveying a perception of the world. Hieroglyphic writing represents the concrete and living transcription of thoughts that are made manifest in a living way in rock, a long-lasting presence for their inscription in a physical reality. According to Dimitri Meeks,

> par leur nom même, les hiéroglyphes préexistent en tant que "hiéroglyphes-paroles" dans le discours divin avant de devenir des hiéroglyphes tracés, gravés sur une surface. Le démiurge crée ce qui existe par la parole (…). L'écriture a une préexistence immatérielle et c'est sous cette forme qu'elle était en usage chez les dieux. Dans le monde des hommes, les hiéroglyphes sont l'incarnation, la matérialisation sur un support de ce qui est d'essence divine.[19]

The same author emphasizes the fact that hieroglyphs, as signs in written script, are imprints that convey the concept of the entire Creation:

> chaque hiéroglyphe-empreinte renvoie donc à une réalité idéale englobée dans la création, le "hiéroglyphe-parole" du langage des dieux.[20]

The successive cursive scripts developed by Pharaonic Egypt are only simplifications of this hieroglyphic system. Although they eventually evolved independently of each other, monumental writing and the various cursive writings were able to influence each other throughout much of history. To varying degrees, they each incorporate a part of this emanation of the divine into the physical world.[21]

In the light of the above, trying to detect in the texts a divine word which we could distinguish for what it is, would be pointless. If the hieroglyphs engraved/painted on the walls of temples and tombs were only the transcription

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déesse libyque, Brussels: Fondation égyptologique Reine Elisabeth (Rites égyptiens V), 1985, 17–19 (F5-G1), pl. 3; A. EL SHAHAWAY, "Les 'individus' qui établissent l'ordre cosmique," in *Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Egyptologists, University of the Aegean, Rhodes, 22-29 May 2008*, P. Kousoulis, N. Lazaridis (eds), *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 241 (2015): 703.

[19] D. MEEKS, *Les Egyptiens et leurs mythes. Appréhender un polythéisme*, 143.

[20] D. MEEKS, *Les Egyptiens et leurs mythes. Appréhender un polythéisme*, 148–149; about the sign as imprint, 147.

[21] See P. VERNUS, "Les espaces de l'écrit dans l'Egypte pharaonique," *Bulletin de la Société française d'égyptologie* 119 (1990): 33–53; S. DONNAT, "L'écrit comme trace de rituel en Egypte ancienne. L'exemple des lettres aux morts," *Archimède: archéologie et histoire ancienne* 1 (2014): 88–95, available on line: <http://archimede.unistra.fr/revue-archimede/>. <halshs-01586110>.

of spoken words – divine by definition – how could we identify what we understand to be a divine word or speech? As is so often the case, the distinction we make would probably not make sense to the ancient Egyptians because of the divine status that was assigned to hieroglyphic writing in Egyptian culture. Obviously, we have to face difficulties created by categorizations that rarely accord with ours.

The written sources at our disposal are extremely numerous and varied. Egyptian divinities speak in different types of texts: funerary and theological compositions, mythological tales, medico-magical writings, texts of royal ideology, ritual scenes and, of course, oracular consultations.

The *Pyramid Texts* (the oldest surviving religious corpus from Pharaonic Egypt which dates from the 5th Dynasty onwards sometimes include words uttered by different deities or other supernatural entities. These words, reported or empowered by recitation (even their engraving in stone), appear frequently in formulas which are intended to ensure the survival of the deceased king in the Afterlife. Thus, in the pyramid of King Unis (Old Kingdom, end of 5th Dynasty), the first king whose pyramid was engraved with these funeral formulas, the discourse of the Deified West is reported as follows:

> Look, she is coming, the beautiful West, to meet you, to meet you with her beautiful tresses, and she is saying: "Welcome, you to whom I gave birth, with rising horn, eye-painted pillar, bull of the sky: your form is distinguished; pass in peace, for I have joined you," so says the beautiful West about Unis.[22]

During the Middle Kingdom, the *Coffin Texts* form a new group of funerary formulas.[23] These are not reserved for the king or members of the royal family but extend to the provincial elite. Several formulas deal with what the deceased considers an abomination. In the following, there is a debate between the gods and the deceased:

> "What I doubly detest, I will not eat. Faeces is my detestation, and I will not eat (…)"
> "What will you live on?" say the gods.

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[22] *Pyramid Texts* § 254. Translated by J. ALLEN, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*[2], Atlanta: Scholars Press (Writings from the Ancient World 38), 47. For the hieroglyphic text, see K. SETHE, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte nach den Papierabdrücken und Photographien der Berliner Museums*, I, Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1908, 282b–284a.

[23] Some *Pyramid Texts* still occur in *Coffin Texts* and the *Book of the Dead*. See for example D. SILVERMAN, "Textual Criticism in the Coffin Texts," in *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*, W. K. Simpson (ed.), New Haven: Yale Egyptological Seminar (Yale Egyptological Studies 3), 1989, 33–34; B. MATHIEU, "La distinction entre Textes des Pyramides et Textes des Sarcophages est-elle légitime?," in *D'un monde à l'autre: Textes des Pyramides & Textes des Sarcophages. Actes de la table ronde internationale, IFAO – 24-26 septembre 2001*, S. Bickel, B. Mathieu (eds), Le Caire: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2004, 247–262.

> "I will live on those three portions which were made for Osiris; one is for Horus, another for Seth, and another one for me, and I am their third."
> "What does Osiris live on?" say the gods.
> "He lives on this green plant which is on the river-banks of *Ggws*."[24]

Such discussions are not uncommon. They show how the deceased takes an active part in the journey that can lead him to a new life. The speech of the gods is thus conjugated with verbs in past and present. But it can also be a speech of a time to come. The words must be pronounced by the deity for an indefinite future. By means of their oral performance, hieroglyphs become animated and brought to life from the moment they were engraved in the stone:

> Seth and Nephthys, go, announce to the gods of the Nile Valley as well as their *akhs*:[25]
> "This Unis has come, an imperishable *akh*. Should he want you to die, you would die; should he want you to live, you will live."[26]

By putting different mythological episodes into narrative form, Egyptian literature can incorporate conversations between gods. It is from the New Kingdom onwards that these long stories appear. The stories incorporate mythological scenarios which otherwise would not be known. In reality, the adventures of the gods show many variations according to place, time and context. Several mythological tales present conflicts that disturb the tranquillity of the Egyptian pantheon. The most famous is probably the one in which Horus is in conflict with his uncle Seth for the legacy of Osiris. The story is preserved on a papyrus dating to the New Kingdom. In order to find a solution to the conflict, the gods seek advice from the goddess Neith. They write her a letter and await the answer:

> Meanwhile, the dispatch from Neith, the great, Mother of the god, reached this Ennead, as they were sitting in the large hall called "Horus in front of the horns." The dispatch was handed over to Thoth. Then Thoth read it out in front of the Lord of All and the entire Ennead. They said with one voice: "This goddess is right." Then the Lord of All got angry with Horus and said to him: "You are weak in your flesh and this function is too heavy for you, dirty kid whose breath stinks."[27]

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[24] *Coffin Texts* 187, translated by R. O. FAULKNER, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1973, 156. See A. DE BUCK, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts, III, Texts of Spells 164-267*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1947, 87–90.
[25] *Akh*: deceased person.
[26] *Pyramid Texts* § 217, translated by J. ALLEN, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*[2], 36. See K. SETHE, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte nach den Papierabdrücken und Photographien der Berliner Museums*, 153a-c.
[27] *Horus and Seth*, 3,5-3,8. Cf. W. K. SIMPSON (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt. An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 94.

This tale is full of speeches and conversations like this one, but other texts exist with less clear mythological references which include divine discourse. One format can be an element of literary dramatization, like the sad prediction of the seven Hathors who declare the destiny of a prince at birth in a tale called *The Doomed Prince*:

> Once upon a time, there was a king and no son had been born to him. [But when His Majesty asked] for himself a son from the gods of his time, they ordered a birth to be granted him. He slept with his wife during the night […] pregnant. She completed the months of childbearing, then a son was born. The (goddesses) Hathors came to determine a fate for him, saying: "He shall die through the crocodile, the snake or the dog." So the people who were beside the child heard and reported it to His Majesty. His Majesty's heart became very very sad.[28]

The end of the text is lost, so we don't know how the prince died. Nevertheless, it is clear that the prediction of the seven Hathors was heard by the human audience.

From the same period, the *Tale of the Two Brothers* relates the violent conflict between two brothers whose names refer to the divine sphere: Inepu and Bata.[29] Both characters seem to live in a human environment which incorporates elements that can be described as "fantastical." So, when Bata, the younger brother, has his herd of cattle enter the stable one evening, the first cow warns him that his older brother Inepu is waiting behind the door, ready to kill him. Probably elaborated from several different stories, the tale as it appears in the extant papyrus involves the gods speaking several times. Having fled the anger of his older brother, Bata went into exile abroad, probably on the Levantine coast. He made his life anew and built a new house. One morning, coming out of his house, he had a strange meeting on the beach:

> (One day), he (the younger brother) went out from his house and encountered the Ennead, as they were walking (along) administering the entire land. Then the Ennead spoke to him in unison: "O Bata (…), are you alone here, having left your home because of the wife of Inepu, your elder brother?"[30]

Bata doesn't answer. It is like a monologue. But they create a wife for Bata because they want him to be happy. Here, by means of the words pronounced by the gods, the scribe uses an ingenious device to take a new step in the story.

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[28] *Doomed Prince*, 4,1-4,5. See for example W. K. SIMPSON (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt. An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 76.

[29] Inepu is the Egyptian name of Anubis while Bata refers to a god of the 17th-18th nomes of Upper Egypt.

[30] For the translation of the text, see W. K. SIMPSON (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt. An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 85.

The conversation of the gods is a pure literary device and does not seem to have any significant value in itself.

Apart from these seemingly banal conversations the gods speak in various places and contexts. When visiting Egyptian temples nowadays, it is possible to read/hear the conversations between the king and various divinities, the *mdw-nṯr* "divine words" which have been carved on the walls. As an indispensable intermediary between gods and men, the Pharaoh, the priest *par excellence*, is always shown as the one who faces the gods during the ritual acts of daily divine worship and certain religious ceremonies. A litany of juxtaposed scenes thus depicts the king presenting an offering to different deities with the appropriate gestures, instruments and words. In return, the god grants benefits to the sovereign and through him to Egypt as a whole. These benefits are uttered directly by the god in a speech that is usually placed above his face. Examples are innumerable.[31]

Some texts regarding royal ideology contain words or speeches spoken by the gods. For example, the text on a stela of Thutmosis III (New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty) appears as a poem uttered by the god Amon, praising the king. It starts as follows: "Thus speaks Amun-Re, Lord of the thrones of the Two Lands."[32]

In the Israel Stela (New Kingdom, 19th Dynasty, reign of Merenptah), there is also a short text spoken by the god to the king:

> Ptah said, regarding the Libyan enemy: "Collect all his crimes to be turned back upon his head. Place him in the hand of Merenptah-hetephimaat that he may cause him to disgorge what he has swallowed like a crocodile."[33]

One of the places where Pharaoh and the gods can meet is in a dream. Several texts exist which tell of the god appearing in the night and addressing the king. The speech of a god in a dream is preserved on the so-called "Dream Stela," a stela more than three meters high which is located between the legs of the sphinx at Giza. The text explains the predestination of prince Thutmose – the next king Thutmose IV – to sit on the throne of Egypt. Here the divine election is not linked with the dynastic god Amun but with the stone figure of the sphinx. During the New Kingdom the sphinx was recognised as an image of the god Harmachis, Greek transcription of the Egyptian expression "Hore-

[31] Concerning the semantic evolution of this motive, see P. DERCHAIN, "Pharaon dans le temple ou l'illusion sacerdotale," in *Les moyens d'expression du pouvoir dans les sociétés anciennes*, Leuven: Peeters (Lettres orientales 5), 1996, 91–99.

[32] For the translation of the text, see W. K. SIMPSON (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt. An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 352–355.

[33] W. K. SIMPSON (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt. An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 359.

makhet," that is to say, "Horus in the horizon," and associated with the Semitic god Houroun. The story takes place in the Memphite region, where princes of the royal family were often educated:

> One of these days, the king's son Thutmose walked about at the time of midday. He had a rest in the shadow of this great god and sleep took him when the sun was at his zenith. He found the Majesty of this noble god speaking with his own mouth as a father speaks to his son, saying: "Look at me, regard me, my son, Thutmose! I am your father, Horemakhet-Khepri-Re-Atum; (I) will give you kingship upon earth at the head of the living people. You shall wear the white crown and the red crown on the throne of the god Geb (…).
> My face is yours, my heart is yours, (and) you belong to me. Behold, my condition is like one in illness, all my limbs being ruined. The sand of the desert, upon which I used to be, faces me (aggressively); and it is in order to cause that you do what is in my heart that I have waited. For I know that you are my son and my protection." (…)
> Thereupon this king's son stared astonished when he heard these [words …]. He understood the words of this god, but he put silence in his heart.[34]

The end of the text, which has many lacunas in the lower part of the stela because of its poor state of preservation, allows us to understand that the king wakes up astonished and probably begins to act for the god. Even if this part of the text is extremely damaged, it can be assumed that Thutmose began work to remove the sand and restore the monument. In fact, actual restorations around the sphinx date to this period.

This kind of dream is not reserved for the king. Thus, the overseer of fowlers Djehutyemhab (New Kingdom, 19th Dynasty) reported in his tomb an extraordinary dream he experienced:

> You are one who has spoken to me yourself, with your own mouth:
> "I am the beautiful Hely,[35] my shape being that of (goddess) Mut. I have come in order to instruct you: Consider your place – take hold of it, without travelling north, without travelling south."
> While I was in a dream, while the earth was in silence, in the deep of the night.[36]

In the same tomb, there is also a long speech by goddess Hathor on another wall.[37] In a different context, some magical or medico-magical formulas may

[34] W. HELCK, *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums, IV. Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1956, 1542,11–1543,16. See B. M. BRYAN, *The Reign of Thutmose IV*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991, 145–146.
[35] Another name of goddess Hathor.
[36] K. M. SZPAKOWSKA, *Behind Closed Eyes: Dreams and Nightmares in Ancient Egypt*, Swansea: University of Wales, Egypt Centre, 2003, 196; K.-J. SEYFRIED, *Das Grab des Djehutiemhab (TT 194)*, Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philip von Zabern (Theben VII), 1995, 71, pl. XXXV.
[37] E. FROOD, *Biographical Texts from Ramesside Egypt*, Atlanta: Scholars Press (Writings from the Ancient World 25), 2007, 93–94.

be accompanied by a reminder of a situation or event that has taken place in the divine world. This reminder creates a kind of precedent that the physician or magician will re-enact by word and gesture, thus bringing greater efficacy to the operation performed. He will extract from mythology the episode that will echo the present situation. For example, Formula 499 of the Ebers Medical Papyrus discusses the treatment of a burn. The patient's recovery will require the recitation of a dialogue between an anonymous entity and the goddess Isis, unnamed but easily recognized by the mention of her son:

> Other (remedy) and conjuration for a burned place on the first day:
> "Your son Horus was burned in the desert! Is there water (there)? There is no water (there). But there is water in my mouth and a Nile between my thighs. I will go extinguish the fire!"
> Words to say on milk of a woman having given birth to a male child, gum, ram hair. To be placed on the burned place.[38]

Another context in which the divine word is involved is the oracle. From the New Kingdom onwards, Egyptians increasingly called upon the gods to solve various problems in their daily lives. It is unlikely that actual spoken oracles existed in Egypt before the Late Period.[39] The evidence for this is debated or contested. There exists a technical terminology for the god's answer to "a" question asked of him. Yet, Egyptian texts, where this interaction occurs, often use the verb "to say" when they refer to the god's answer. This is clearly a transposition, with the Egyptians expressing the sense of the oracle, which was not an audible reality. One of the oracular techniques used comprised presenting two versions of the same case to the god. It was then left to the deity to identify the one that corresponded to the truth, through the movement of his statue or his processional bark. Such oracular petitions show the following pattern: "concerning the case opposing X to Y, the god said: X is right," the second text indicating that "concerning the case opposing X to Y: Y is right." Even if the decision of the god is introduced by the verb "to say", it is impossible to confirm whether the answer was given orally. The Egyptians transpose into script a mode of conversation that may have been devoid of any oral exchange. This state of affairs thus makes equivocal the way in which the Egyptians understood the nature of a discourse emanating from the divine sphere. Undoubtedly their way of understanding the reality of the world was entirely different from ours today.

Personal names like *ḏd*-god's name-*iw=f/s-ʿnḫ* "God N said: he/she will live" – for example Djedkhonsuiufankh "(god)-Khonsu-said-he-will-live" – at-

[38] Papyrus Ebers, § 499. See T. BARDINET, *Les papyrus médicaux de l'Egypte pharaonique*, Paris: Fayard, 1995, 323.
[39] A. VON LIEVEN, "Divination in Ägypten", *Altorientalische Forschungen* 26 (1999): 83.

tested from New Kingdom onwards, are probably related to prayers or oracular consultations at the time of the birth of a new-born. The positive destiny of the child is thus ensured by the divine will in a spoken format.[40] As we have observed, the gods could address everyone: other deities, individuals from the – at least from our point of view – imaginary world, the deceased, the king and living human beings. Short extracts from complete myths are sometimes taken to form a god's speech in order to transfer their power to medical and magical formulas. This causes them to be decontextualized, but they grant us glimpses of the richness of those Egyptian myths that are now lost.

The fact remains that the Egyptian deities did not stop speaking for three millennia. Their words were "collected" by theologians and written down by Egyptian scribes, without commenting on how they conceived or felt about this abundance of divine discourse that surrounded them. The words of the god were not insignificant, but neither were they uncommon. The worshipper walking in the courtyard of the temple could see Pharaoh and the gods talking to each other; the patient consulted a doctor/magician who occasionally recited divine words to reinforce the effectiveness of his actions, the literature lover could read or listen to adventures featuring the gods quarrelling. The voice of the gods seems to have been part of the daily environment of the ancient Egyptians.

Abstract

This contribution offers a reflection about the nature of divine speech in Ancient Egyptian sources. From these, there seems to be no perceptible difference between the language of men and that of gods, neither in lexicon nor in syntax. However, this situation is perhaps misleading. Indeed, Egyptians could use many communication methods, thus highlighting a differentiation between the language of men and that of gods. Therefore, different types of texts are analyzed in order to bring to light these strategies of communication: funerary and theological compositions, mythological tales, medico-magical writings, texts of royal ideology, ritual scenes and, of course, oracular consultations.

[40] See A. VON LIEVEN, "Divination in Ägypten", 91 with reference.

DIVINE SPEECH IN HITTITE DREAMS

Alice Mouton*

In the Hittite cuneiform texts (Anatolia of the second half of the second millennium BCE), divine speech often occurs in dreams. For this reason, I will focus this paper on divine speech in dream accounts. These various narratives will be examined in context. I will only deal with the dream narratives that quote divine speech, thus excluding any other type of divine communication, such as gestures or visual occurrences. I will also exclude several fragmentary texts as well as other complicated instances of divine speech. Thus circumscribed, my corpus is composed of twelve texts dating from the 14th and 13th centuries BCE. Several literary genres are represented:

1. prayers;
2. historical records;
3. literary texts;
4. accounts of vows.

In the text of a ritual for the so-called MAH goddesses and the goddesses of human destiny, we read the following passage:

> The benevolent speech [which you, my gods] have uttered through a dream, (you), my gods, put that benevolent speech in motion! Do not alter (this) last name! Keep the king, the queen and the royal princes in (your) favor![1] Keep them alive and well! Give them long years![2]

In this passage, the dream conveys a benevolent speech of the gods, a "speech of well-being or favor" as the Hittite states. The ritual practitioner asks the gods to keep the promise of divine protection they made to the royal dreamer. Such dreams of divine favor are also mentioned in historical texts, as we shall see.

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[1] Correspondence mentions wishes using the same expression *aššuli pahš-* "to protect benevolently." These wishes are also greetings in the context of correspondence. Hittite *aššul-* means "well-being," "favor" and "greetings" at the same time.

[2] KUB 43.55 ii 1-6; A. MOUTON, *Rêves hittites. Contribution à une histoire et une anthropologie du rêve en Anatolie ancienne*, Leiden: Brill (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 28), 2007, 147–149, "Texte 34:" *zašhiyaz=a āššulaš memian memiešten nu* DINGIR^{MEŠ}*=YA apūn aššulaš memian iyatten nu=za=kan appezziyan ŠUM-an lē wahnutteni nu* LUGAL MUNUS. LUGAL DUMU^{MEŠ} LUGAL*=ya aššuli pahhašten n=aš* TI-*an hattulahhan=(n)a harten* [*n*]*u=šmaš* MU.KAM^{HÁ} GÍD.DA *peškitten*.

1. PRAYERS

Extract 1:
In the prayer of Kantuzzili, a Hittite prince of the beginning of the Imperial period, divine speech is asked for. Here is the relevant passage:

> [Now] let my god open the bottom of his soul to me with sincerity, let him [tel]l me my faults. I will acknowledge them. Either let my god speak to me in a dream, let my god open his heart to me, let him tell [me] my [fa]ults – I will acknowledge them; or let the ENSI female diviner[3] tell me, [or else] let the AZU-man of the Sun god tell [me] through a liver. Let my god open [the bottom of his soul] to me with sincerity; let him tell me my faults. I will acknowledge them.[4]

Among the various ways the god might use to communicate with the prince, dreams are mentioned. Note that articulated divine speech is clearly mentioned in this extract, with the use of verb "to say" (*te-*/*tar-*). The other channels are oracular techniques, such as hepatoscopy. This passage is partly a calque of an Old Babylonian model. However, it is still relevant to the Hittite world, since the Hittite prayers we will examine now are not so different.

Extract 2:
In a prayer of Great King Muwatalli II (*c.* 1290-1273), we find the following passage:

> If someone has knocked down the throne of the Storm god (or his) *huwaši*-stone, or if someone has plugged (his) sacred *fountain*, I will put back in order [whatever I will find out]. However, [I will perform an oracular inquiry] about what I will not discover nor find on a wooden tablet. God, clarify this matter through a dream (in case) the great Old Man can[not] tell me! […] I will put [it] back in order. I will do (according to) the god's word(s). (You), Storm god, my Lord, [look at the land again with benevolent eyes] and [let there be] good concord, well-being, *tarawiya*[5] and abundance [in the land].[6]

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[3] The ENSI is a female diviner specialized in libanomancy and necromancy. She sometimes interprets dreams, like the other diviners.
[4] KUB 30.10 Obverse 24'-28'; A. MOUTON, *Rêves hittites*, 118–119, "Texte 22:" [*kinun*]=*a=mu=za ammel* DINGIR=*YA* ŠÀ=*ŠU* ZI=*ŠU hūmantet kardit kīnuddu nu=mu wašdul=mit* [*tēd*]*du n=e=zan ganiešmi naššu=mu* DINGIR=*YA zašheya mēmau nu=mu=za* DINGIR=*YA* ŠÀ=*ŠU kinuddu* [*nu=mu wašd*]*ul=mit tēddu n=e=zan ganiešmi našma=mu* ^{MUNUS}ENSI *mēmau* [*našma=mu Š*]*A* ^{D}UTU ^{LÚ}AZU *IŠTU* ^{UZU}NÍG.GIG *mēmau nu=mu=za* DINGIR=*YA hūmantet kardit* [ŠÀ=*ŠU* ZI=*ŠU*] *kīnuddu nu=mu wašdul=mit teddu n=e=zan ganiešmi*.
[5] The meaning of this term is unknown.
[6] KBo 11.1 Obverse 40-44; A. MOUTON, *Rêves hittites*, 125–126, "Texte 26:" *mān* ^{GIŠ}GU.ZA ^{D}U ^{NA4}ZI.KIN *kuiški katta laknut našma=kan šuppa* TÚL *kuiški šahta nu* [*kuit uemiyami*] *n=at* EGIR-*pa* SIG$_5$-*ahmi UL=ma kuit uemiyami UL=at* $^{GIŠ.HUR}$*gulzattanaz uem*[*iyami n=at ariyami UL=ma=a*]*t=mu šalliš* ^{LÚ}ŠU.GI *memai nu=mu* DINGIR-*LIM kūn memian teshit parkunut ka-*[...]x EGIR-*pa* SIG$_5$-*ahheškemi nu AWĀT* DINGIR-*LIM ēššahhi nu=kan* ^{D}U EN=*YA* [KUR-*e*

Note the expression "the god's speech" which designates the message-dream hoped for by the king. By the expression "message-dream" coined by Leo Oppenheim,[7] we designate divine messages conveyed by dreams. In the expected dream of our extract, the king hopes that the god will explain both what went wrong and how to solve the issue, in other words, what to offer him for appeasing his anger.

Extract 3:
One of the prayers of Great King Muršili II (*c.* 1318-1290 BCE) against an epidemic is quite comparable with what we have just seen. It states:

> Or else if you (pl.) want to impose a special compensation [on m]e, say it to me through a dream and I will give it you. (...) § [Furthermore], if (it is) also because of another matter (that) many people are dying, either let me experience it through a dream, or let it be [determ]ined through an oracle, or let a man of the deity tell it,[8] or, as I have ordered (it) to all the *šankunni*-priests, let them sleep in a consecrated manner. Storm god of Hattuša, my Lord, let me live! May the gods, my Lords, show their providence, let someone experience it through a dream and let the matter because of which many people are dying be discovered![9]

Divine speech is asked for through a dream that the king could receive. The epidemic which provokes many deaths is a direct consequence of the Great King's faults, hence his urge to discover what he did wrong and how to placate the gods. Note here that the oneiric experience is designated by the idiomatic

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anda āššauūt IGI^{HÁ}-*it namma au nu=kán* ŠÀ KUR-*TI āšš*]*u takšul aššul tara*[*w*]*iyaš miyatar=(r)a* [*anda kišaru*].

[7] A. L. OPPENHEIM, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East. With a Translation of an Assyrian Dream-Book*, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society NS 46/3), 1956.

[8] "The man of the deity" is a member of the temple personnel, as shown by F. PECCHIOLI DADDI, "^{LÚ}*zilipuriyatalla* and $^{LÚ/MUNUS}$*ḫuwaššanalla*. Some Observations on Two Particular Religious Orders," in *Offizielle Religion, lokale Kulte und individuelle Religiosität. Akten des religionsgeschichtlichen Symposiums 'Kleinasien und angrenzende Gebiete vom Beginn des 2. bis zur Mitte des 1. Jahrtausends v. Chr.' (Bonn, 20. -22. Februar 2003)*, M. Hutter, S. Hutter-Braunsar (eds), Münster: Ugarit-Verlag (AOAT 318), 2004, 357–367. In our extract, a "man of the deity" speaks on behalf of the deity. However, the text does not specify in what way he does so. This is on the basis of this passage that some scholars have suggested to translate "man of the deity" as "prophet." The evidence is more than slim, however, and no other Hittite text supports this hypothesis.

[9] KUB 14.8 Reverse 34'-36'; 41'-48', A. MOUTON, *Rêves hittites*, 121–122, "Texte 24:" *našma= kan mān* [*amm*]*uk=ma kuitki šarnikzel hanti išhiyattēni* [*n=a*]*t=mu tešha-z memiešten nu=šmaš= at pihhi* (...) § [*namma*] *mān tamētaz=(zi)ya kuēzqa uddānaz akkiišketta*[(*r*)]*i* [(*n=at=za=ka*)]*n naššu tešhit uwallu našma=at ariyašešnaz* [*handay*(*a*)]*ttaru našma=at* ^{LÚ}DINGIR-*LIM-nianza= ma memāu našma ANA* [($^{LÚ.MEŠ}$SANGA *ku-it*) *h*(*ūmand*)]*āš watarnahhun n=at=šamaš šuppaya še*[(*škiiškanzi nu=mu* ^{D}U ^{URU}*HATT*)]*I* EN=*YA hūišnut nu=za* DINGIR^{MEŠ} *BĒLU*^{MEŠ}*=YA* [(*parā handandātar*)] *tikkušnuwandu n=at=za=kan ap*[(*iya kuiški tešhit aušdu nu kuēz=(z)a*)] *uddānaz akkiške*[(*ttari n=at=kan uemiyattaru*)].

expression "to see for oneself" (*-za=kan auš-*), which literally means "to visually experience," so that the visual component of the dream is privileged. This expression is the most common when referring to seeing a dream, but it does not totally exclude the aural dimension of the dream. The text also refers to *šankunni*-priests who have to sleep in a consecrated manner (*šuppaya šešk-*), a clear allusion to divinatory incubation, a technique otherwise attested in the Hittite texts; we will examine another mention of it below. This oracular technique consists of sleeping in front of a god's image or offering table after a ritual conditioning. Through this ritualized sleep, the *šankunni*-priest hopes to receive a message-dream of the god he serves. Note that the Hittite Great King most likely performs divinatory incubation in person in the context of some cultic festivals: several festival texts mention his sleeping in the "sacred bed" of the god during the ceremonies.[10]

2. HISTORICAL RECORDS

Besides prayers, several historical records show the importance of divine speech occurring in dreams.

Extract 4:
The so-called Apology of Great King Hattušili III (CTH 81) (*c.* 1267-1240 BCE in middle chronology) includes many dream reports. Since he usurped the royal throne of the Hittite kingdom, Hattušili tries to justify his actions. Throughout this text, the dream narratives play an important role in his rhetoric, as we will see. The first dream account is quite unusual in the Hittite corpus:

> Šawoška, my Lady, sent Muwatalli, my brother to Muršili, my father through a dream (saying): "For Hattušili, the years (are already) short, he will not live (long). (Therefore), hand him over to me, let him be my *šankunni*-priest and he (shall remain) alive."[11]

According to Hattušili, Muwatalli his brother served as an intermediary of the goddess Šawoška in a dream seen by his father Muršili II. Šawoška of the city of Šamuha is the personal goddess of Hattušili. Thus, Muwatalli speaks on behalf of the goddess. This is the only example in which a human intermediary of a deity is still alive at the time he appears in a dream. Hittite texts rather

[10] A. MOUTON, "Usages privés et publics de l'incubation d'après les textes hittites," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 3 (2003): 73–91.
[11] KUB 1.1+ i 12-17 and duplicates; A. MOUTON, *Rêves hittites*, 88–90, "Texte 2:" *nu* [(D*IŠTAR* GAŠAN=*YA*)] *ANA* I*Muršili ABI=YA* Ù-*it* INIR.GÁL-*in* ŠEŠ=*YA uiyat ANA* I*Ha*[(*tt*)]*ušili=wa* MU.KAM^{HÁ} *maninkuwanteš UL=war=aš* TI-*ann*[(*aš n*)]*u=war=an ammuk parā pāi nu=war=aš=mu* L[(Ú*ša*)]*nkunniš ēšdu nu=war=aš* TI-*anza.*

mention dead individuals appearing in dreams, who thus serve as intermediaries between gods and men. Leo Oppenheim already commented on this unusual dream account in his famous *Dream-book*. He compared Muwatalli's role of divine intermediary to the *eidôla* of Homeric literature. An *eidôlon* (εἴδωλον) is a vision sent by a deity to a mortal. Oneiros (the Homeric dream) is a personified *eidôlon* who appears only in dreams. He can appear under the shape of a deceased or under that of a living kin of the dreamer.[12] In the Ancient Near East, only this dream of Muršili shows a living kin of the dreamer speaking on behalf of a deity in a dream.

In this extract, Muwatalli quotes the goddess *verbatim*, in the first person singular. The goddess predicts a very short life to Hattušili, whose health is known to be very fragile. She promises to keep him alive in exchange of his serving her as a *šankunni*-priest, one of the highest offices in the temple personnel. Hittite Great Kings are often described as *šankunni*-priests of their personal gods and sometimes of all the gods. However, one can reasonably believe that this is an honorific title, since there is no Hittite text describing Hittite Great Kings actually going to the temple day after day to serve the gods. Muršili obeyed Šawoška's command and Hattušili actually became her *šankunni*-priest while he was still young.[13] Divine commands uttered in dreams are perceived as important as those happening in other circumstances.

Extract 5:
In Hattušili's Apology, another divine speech occurring in a dream is quoted some twenty lines later:

> Šawoška, my Lady, appeared to me in a dream and, through a dream, she said this to me: "(It is) I (who) entrust you to (another) deity, (therefore) do not be afraid!"[14]

This episode occurs when Muršili II, Hattušili's father, dies and Muwatalli II, Hattušili's elder brother, becomes the Great King. At that time, Hattušili is chief of his brother's bodyguards and leader of his armies. Muwatalli also makes him rule the Upper Land. By doing so, Muwatalli provokes the wrath of Arma-Tarhunta, son of Zidā, who was ruling the Upper Land previously. Apparently, Arma-Tarhunta reacts in the following way: he manages to summon Hattušili to the wheel, which seems to be a legal procedure of some

[12] This is the case of a dream sent by Zeus to Agamemnon in Song II of the *Iliad*, where Oneiros takes Nestor's appearance. One could also quote Nausicaa's dream in which one of her friends appears as a messenger of Athena in Song VI of the *Odyssey*.
[13] KUB 1.1+ i 17-19 and duplicates; A. MOUTON, *Rêves hittites*, 88–90, "Texte 2."
[14] KUB 1.1+ i 36-38 and duplicates; A. MOUTON, *Rêves hittites*, 89–90, "Texte 2:" ^{D}*IŠTAR=ma=mu* GAŠAN=*YA* Ù-*a*[(*t*)] *nu=mu* Ù-*it kī memišta* DINGIR-*LIM-ni=wa=(t)ta ammuk tarnahhi nu=wa lē nahti*.

sort. We do not know what such a procedure consisted of, but its legal function is plain in this text. Muwatalli, the Great King, accepts to let his own brother appear in front of the wheel, which shows that this was a serious political crisis. It is at that particular moment that Hattušili's dream is said to happen, according to Hattušili himself, of course. Because of what I have just mentioned, I suggest to slightly alter the translation of this extract in the following way: "(It is) I (who) entrust you to THE deity", where the mentioned deity might be the deity of the wheel of justice. Through this new interpretation, one can understand that through this dream, Šawoška promises that Hattušili will win his trial over his adversary Arma-Tarhunta. To my mind, this interpretation is more satisfactory than the traditional one, the first one, which does not make much sense in this context.[15] My interpretation is actually confirmed by the immediate continuation of the text, which states:

> I was (declared) innocent thanks to the goddess. Since the goddess, my Lady, was holding me by the hand, she never abandoned me neither to an ill-intended deity, nor to an ill-intended judgment.[16]

Extract 6:
The third divine speech occurring in a dream is as follows:

> Later, the goddess, my Lady, appeared to me in a dream (saying): "[Together with] (your) household, serve me!" So together with my household, I [serv]ed the goddess.[17]

This is another divine command, this time directly received by Hattušili through a dream. This sequence occurs at the time when Hattušili marries Puduhepa, the daughter of a priest. The passage immediately preceding ours states:

> I took as a spouse Puduhepa, the daughter of Pentipšarri, the *šankunni*-priest, according to the goddess' word(s). We got along well. The goddess gave us the love of husband (and) wife. We made sons (and) daughters.[18]

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[15] H. OTTEN, *Die Apologie Hattusilis III. Das Bild der Überlieferung*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten 24), 1981, 7 translates: "Einer Gottheit vertraue ich dich an."
[16] KUB 1.1+ i 39-41 and duplicates; H. OTTEN, *Die Apologie Hattusilis III.*, 6–7: *nu* DINGIR-*LIM=za parkūēššun nu=mu* DINGIR-*LUM kuit* GAŠAN=*YA* ŠU-*za harta nu=mu* : *hūwappi* DINGIR-*LIM-ni* : *hūwappi* DI-*ešni parā UL kuwapikki tarnaš*.
[17] KUB 1.1+ iii 4-6; A. MOUTON, *Rêves hittites*, 89–90, "Texte 2:" *namma=mu* DINGIR-*LUM* GAŠAN=*YA* Ù-*at* [*QĀDU*] É-*TI=wa=mu* ÌR-*ahhut nu ANA* DINGIR-*LIM QĀDU* É-*TI=YA* [ÌR-*a*]*hhahat*.
[18] KUB 1.1+ iii 1-4; H. OTTEN, *Die Apologie Hattusilis III.*, 16–17: [*nu*=(*za*)] DUMU.MUNUS [I]*Pentip*[(*šar*)]*ri* [LÚ]SANGA [f]*Puduhepan* [*IŠT*]*U* INIM DINGIR-*LIM* DAM-*anni dahhun nu handāuen* [*nu=nn*]*aš* DINGIR-*LUM ŠA* [LÚ]*MUDI* D[A]M *āššiyatar pešta* [(*nu=nn*)]*aš* DUMU.NITA[MEŠ] DUMU.MUNUS[MEŠ] *iyauen*.

This extract refers to a divine command asking Hattušili to marry Puduhepa. There is another allusion of the same episode in another text.[19]

Hattušili was already serving Šawoška since he was young, as the first extract we have studied showed. But here, it is his whole household comprising his wife Puduhepa and his children that have to serve the goddess. Note that neither promises nor threats are uttered here. Only the goddess's demand is expressed without any justification. In spite of this, Hattušili obeys the divine command. I suspect that this particular divine speech is supposed to strengthen Puduhepa's legitimacy, picturing her as a loyal servant of the goddess, just like her husband.

Extract 7:
Yet another speech of Šawoška occurs in another dream reported in the same text:

> Since Šawoška, my Lady, talked kingship to me in that way, Šawoška, my Lady, appeared to my wife in a dream at that time (saying): "(It is) I (who) will march before your husband and all Hattuša will turn onto your husband's side! Since (it is) I (who) made him great, I have never abandoned him neither to an ill-intended judgment (nor) to an ill-intended deity. Now, I will take him and settle him as a *šankunni*-priest of the Sun goddess of Arinna. (As for) you, worship me (under the shape of) Šawoška *paraššī*!"[20]

The beginning of this extract shows the context in which this dream occurred, namely when Šawoška "talked kingship" to Hattušili, which indicates that Hattušili justifies his *coup d'état* against Urhi-Tešub, his nephew and legitimate heir on the Hittite throne, by the alleged occurrence of a divine command. This time, Hattušili's wife Puduhepa receives a dream about her husband. In this dream, Šawoška first states that she will march before Hattušili, an expression which frequently occurs in the Hittite historical records for describing divine support in a military context. I think that this statement of the goddess could refer to Hattušili's *coup d'état* itself. Šawoška does not only promise her support to Hattušili, but she also affirms that the whole kingdom will follow him: the text mentions "all Hattuša," which designates the whole land of Hattuša, i.e. the whole Hittite kingdom. The continuation of this dreamt divine speech repeats word by word what Hattušili has mentioned earlier in the

[19] A. MOUTON, *Rêves hittites*, 91–92, "Texte 3."
[20] KUB 1.1+ iv 7-16; A. MOUTON, *Rêves hittites*, 89 and 91, "Texte 2:" *ammuk=ma* LUGAL-*UTTA* ^{D}*IŠTAR* GAŠAN=*YA annišan=pat kuit memišket nu apē*[(*d*)]*ani mehuni* ^{D}*IŠTAR* GAŠAN=*YA ANA* DAM=*YA* Ù-*at ANA* ^{LÚ}*MUDI*=[(*K*)]*A=wa ammuk peran* : *hūiyami nu=wa=za=kan* ^{URU}KÙ.BABBAR-*aš hūmanza IŠTU ŠA* ^{LÚ}*MUDI=KA neyari šallanunun=war=an kuit ammuk nu=war=an huwappi* DI-*ešni huwappi* DINGIR-*LIM-ni UL parā UL kuwapikki tarnahhun kinuna=ya=war=an karapmi nu=war=an ANA* ^{D}UTU ^{URU}TÚL-*na AŠŠUM* ^{LÚ}SANGA-*UTTIM tittanumi ziq=(q)a=wa=mu=za* ^{D}*IŠTAR paraššin iya.*

same text, namely that Šawoška never abandoned him to an ill-intended deity neither to an ill-intended judgment.

The allusion which is made of Hattušili becoming the *šankunni*-priest of the Sun goddess of Arinna is an allusion to his becoming Great King of Hattuša.

In the last section of Šawoška's speech, she asks Puduhepa to worship her as Šawoška *parašši*. The term *parašši-* could be a Luwian adjective, but its meaning is unknown to us since it is a *hapax legomenon*. The context seems to imply that Šawoška requests Puduhepa to perform a specific festival in exchange of her supporting the king.

Extract 8:
The next and last dreamt divine speech of the Apology of Hattušili is as follows:

> Šawoška appeared in a dream to the lords that Urhi-Tešub had once chased out, (saying): "On your own you could do nothing (lit. you were weak), but (I), Šawoška, turned all the lands of Hattuša onto the side of Hattušili."[21]

It is important to realize that this dream is a collective dream received at the same time by all the lords who were Hattušili's allies against Urhi-Tešub, Hattušili's nephew and rival. The possibility for a dream to appear to several persons at once is also attested elsewhere in the Ancient Near East: we know of several Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian examples. In this particular dream, Šawoška claims her responsibility in Hattušili's victory over Urhi-Tešub.

3. LITERARY TEXTS

The last extract of the Apology of Hattušili we have seen leads us quite close to what some call "literature:" history, rhetoric and literary tradition are obviously intertwined in that text. So let us now move on to a literary text, namely the Hittite version of the legend of Sargon of Agade "king of battle."

Extract 9:
All the tablets of this ensemble date from the Imperial period, but the composition is older. The following extract has no equivalent in the Akkadian versions of this legend. Therefore, one could reasonably believe that this is an Anatolian creation.[22] Here is the relevant extract:

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[21] KUB 1.1+ iv 19-23; A. MOUTON, *Rêves hittites*, 90–91, "Texte 2:" *nu* ^{I}*Urhi-*^{D}[(U-*u*)]*baš BĒLU*^{HÁ} *kuieš kuwapi arha* [(*u*)]*iyat nu*=[(*šm*)]*aš* ^{D}*IŠTAR* Ù-*at innarauwa*=*šmaš dariyante*[(*š* KUR.KUR)]$^{MEŠ\ URU}$*HATTI*=*ma*=*wa*=*k*[*an*] *hūmanda* ^{D}*IŠTAR ANA* ^{I}*Hat*[(*tušil*)]*i andan nehhun.*

[22] M. FORLANINI, "Le rôle de Purušḫanda dans l'histoire hittite," in *Hittitology Today: Studies on Hittite and Neo-Hittite Anatolia in Honor of Emmanuel Laroche's 100th Birthday*, A. Mouton

> [...] Sargon woke up from (his) sleep. He addressed (the following) word(s) to the palace officials: "Let them call for me the heroes who had described before [me] the trip (as something) frightening!" § I, Sargon [will] ta[lk] to the heroes in (those) term(s): "Heroes, listen to me! I will report to you the words Ištar addressed me: (she said that) I will vanquish the land to which I will go."[23]

So immediately after he wakes up, Sargon summons the heroes who are supposed to accompany him to Purushanda. Purushanda is a well-known Anatolian city. Sargon relays Ištar's words of encouragement he received in his dream, a message-dream which is quite similar to those of Hattušili we have examined before.

Extract 10:

In the Hittite version of the *Epic of Gilgameš*, several passages remain without Mesopotamian parallels, just like in the case of the Hittite version of Sargon's legend we have just seen. This is the case of the following passage which states:

> "[…] we will sleep." (Then), it became morning. Enkidu replied to Gilgameš: "My brother, the drea[m I saw] last night (was as follows): Anu, Enlil, Ea and the Sun god of Heaven [were gathering] as an ass[embly]. Anu spoke before Enlil: 'Since those ones killed the heavenly bull [and since] they killed Huwa[wa], the one who [*densely*] *plan*[*ted*] the mountains with cedar(s)," says Anu, "[let one] of them [die]." Enlil said: "Let Enkidu die, may Gilgameš not die!" § The Sun god of Heaven replied to the heroic Enlil: "Is it not at your command that they killed (them), the heavenly bull and Huwawa? And now the innocent Enkidu shall die?!" Enlil became angry against the Sun god of Heaven, (saying): "Why do you walk by their side day after day like a friend [...]?"[24]

(ed.), 5e Rencontres d'Archéologie de l'IFEA, Istanbul: IFEA, 2017, 135–136 gives convincing arguments in favor of an intervention of the Old Assyrian merchants of Anatolia. For the presence of the legend of Sargon of Agade in Old Assyrian Anatolia, see also M. VAN DE MIEROOP, "Sargon of Agade and his Successors in Anatolia," *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici* 42 (2000): 133–159.

[23] KBo 22.6 i 6'-13'; A. MOUTON, *Rêves hittites*, 107–109, "Texte 18:" [...]x-*pa* LUGAL-*ginaš teššhaz parkuīdd*[*at nu*? L]Ú.MEŠSAG *udder=šet memiškiuwan dā*[*iš*] LÚ.MEŠUR.SAG-*iš=wa=mu halziyandu* KASKAL-*an=wa*=[*mu*] *kuiēš peran hatugan taršikir* § LUGAL-*ginaš* LÚ.MEŠUR.SAG-*liyaš uddani=mit t*[*ēmi*] LÚ.MEŠUR.SAG-*aš ištamašten=mu* DIŠTAR-*i*[*š=m*]*u kue uddār tēt ta=šmaš=at tēmi utnē kuedani pāimi* [*t*]*=a=z tarahmi*.

[24] KUB 8.48 i 1-16; A. MOUTON, *Rêves hittites*, 111–112, "Texte 20:" [*nu šup*]*pariyauwaštati nu lukkešta* [*nu* D]*Enkituš ANA* DGILGAMEŠ EGIR-*pa memiški*[*uwan dāiš* ŠE]Š-*ni=mi kēdani=wa=za=kan* GE6-*anti kuin* Ù-[*an ūhhun*] *nu=wa* D*Anuš* DEN.LÍL-*aš* DÉ.A-*aš* DUTU AN-*E=ya a*[*šeššar iēr*] *nu=wa* D*Anuš ANA* DEN.LÍL IGI-*anda memišta apūš=wa=kan kuit* GU4*alūn kuennir* D*Huwa*[*wain=(n)a kuit*] *kuennir* HUR.SAGMEŠ*=wa kuiš IŠTU* GIŠERIN *warh*[*u-...*] *nu=wa* D*Anuš IQBI kētaš=(š)a=wa=kan ištarna* [1-*aš akdu*] DEN.LÍL-*aš=ma IQBI* D*Enkituš=wa akdu* DGILGAMEŠ-*uš=ma=wa lē aki* § *nu* DUTU AN-*E ANA* DEN.LÍL UR.SAG-*li* EGIR-*pa memi*[*škiuwan dāiš*] *UL=war=an=kan tuetaza memiyanaz kuennir* GU4*alūn* D*Huwawain=(n)a*

In Enkidu's dream, the speech of four gods is reported *verbatim*: they discuss Gilgameš' and Enkidu's punishment. This literary account is quite unique within the Hittite corpus. However, we will encounter another divine dialogue in a minute.

4. ACCOUNTS OF VOWS

Extract 11:
Let us now examine the passage of an account of vows:

> A dream (of) the queen: "In a dream, the god Šarruma told me: 'Give me (something) to eat in twelve locations in the mountain.' They will perform an oracular inquiry."[25]

Here the message-dream is a straightforward divine demand. The next extract coming from the same text is more unusual.

Extract 12:
This other dream report includes a fascinating dialogue between a deity and the queen:

> [A dream (of) the quee]n: when the god Kuwaršu (uttered the following) word(s). As [Ku]rwašu, in the dream, said [to] the queen: "(Concerning) that issue of your husband that you take to heart, he (will remain) alive. I will give him a hundred years (to live)," the queen, in the dream, made the following vow: "If you act in this way for me and (if) my husband (remains) alive, for (you), god, I will place three *pithoi*, one (full of) oil, one of honey (and) one of fruits."[26]

This passage is the only Hittite text which describes in detail a dreamt dialogue between a mortal and a god. As far as I know, such a phenomenon is not attested in the other cuneiform sources.

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kinun=ma : *niwall*[*iš*] ^{D}*Enkituš aki* ^{D}EN.LÍL-*aš=ma=kán ANA* ^{D}UTU AN-*E* [*k*]*artimmiēšta zik=wa=šmaš kuit iwar* […] ^{LÚ}*TAPPI=ŠU* U$_4$.KAM-*tili kattan iyattati*.

[25] KUB 15.1 ii 42-44; A. MOUTON, *Rêves hittites*, 262 and 265, "Texte 98:" Ù-*TUM* MUNUS.LUGAL *zašhiya=wa=mu* ^{D}LUGAL-*maš IQBI INA* HUR.SAG=*ma=wa=mu=kan šer* 12 *AŠRA adanna pāi ariyanzi*.

[26] KUB 15.1 iii 7'-16'; A. MOUTON, *Rêves hittites*, 262–263 and 265, "Texte 98:" [Ù^{TUM} MUNUS.LUGA]L INIM ^{D}*Gurwašu=kan kuwapi* [*anda* ^{D}*Gu*]*rwašuš=kan* GIM-*an* ŠÀ Ù-*TI* [*AN*]*A* MUNUS.LUGAL *IQBI apūn=wa kuin ŠA* ^{LÚ}*MUDI=KA* INIM-*an* ZI-*za harti nu=war=aš* TI-*anza* 1 ME MU.KAM^{HA}=*ya=wa=(š)ši pihhi* MUNUS.LUGAL=*ma=za=kan* ŠÀ Ù-*TI kišan IKRŪB mān=wa=mu apēniššuwan iyaši nu=wa* ^{LÚ}*MUDI=YA* TI-*anza nu=wa ANA* DINGIR-*LIM* 3 ^{DUG}*haršiyalli* 1-*EN ŠA* Ì 1-*EN ŠA* LÀL 1-*EN ŠA INBI tehhi*.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Historical records, especially Hattušili's Apology, make an extensive use of message-dreams. Such a phenomenon is not exclusive to Hittite Anatolia; it can also be observed in ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian sources. This can be easily explained by the usefulness of message-dreams in the sovereigns' rhetoric: through these dream reports, kings most often insist on their privileged relationship with a particular deity. This is the case in the Apology of Hattušili, where the king uses all the dream accounts we have examined to demonstrate Šawoška's special connection with him.[27] Dream is an intimate and a universal event at the same time: only the dreamer knows what he saw and each human being experiences dreams but does so individually. These two characteristics of the dream make it the perfect ideological tool in a society where the reality of the dream is not questioned. While reporting a dream, both the royal dreamer and the scribe who will write it down enjoy a certain liberty: without openly lying about what was seen and heard, they can interpret it the way they want. The anthropologist Michel Perrin[28] has found the perfect expression for describing such a phenomenon: he calls it "a posteriori premonitory dreams" ("rêves prémonitoires a posteriori"). In other words, mundane dreams are reinterpreted as conveying divine messages later in the dreamer's life for serving his own rhetoric. Indeed, it would be too simplistic to interpret Hattušili's dream accounts as straightforward lies, since, in his own opinion, Hittite gods are always watching and could punish him any time. "A posteriori premonitory dreams" are also known in other ancient Near Eastern sources. One could, for instance, refer to Gyges's dream foretelling the victory of his enemy Aššurbanipal.[29]

As for the divine dialogue dreamt by Enkidu in the *Epic of Gilgameš*, it is clearly a literary device which combines several functions. First, it highlights a protagonist's state of mind through the dream he received. This facilitates identification between the audience and the protagonist. Second, the frequent use of premonitory dreams in the narrative allows insertions of predictions, which emphasize both the gods' unlimited power and the men's futile arrogance. Therefore, one can say that, in a literary context, divine speech heard in a dream has a didactic function. Finally, in other contexts, the gods use dreams to directly formulate a specific demand to the dreamer. In such cases, the

[27] H. A. HOFFNER, "Propaganda and Political Justification in Hittite Historiography," in *Unity and Diversity. Essays in History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East*, H. Goedicke, J. J. M. Roberts (eds), Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975, 49–62.
[28] M. PERRIN, *Les praticiens du rêve. Un exemple de chamanisme*, Paris: PUF, 1992, 66.
[29] M. NISSINEN, *References to Prophecy in Neo-Assyrian Sources*, Helsinki: University of Helsinki (SAAS 7), 1998, 58–59.

dream is one of the few divinatory media through which a god can directly express himself to a mortal. For this reason, men yearn for message-dreams, so that they can finally understand what their divine masters want.

Abstract
Hittite dream accounts (Anatolia of the second half of the second millennium BCE) show that, in the eyes of the ancient Anatolians, many dreams were divinely sent. Since "message-dreams" could take various shapes, this paper will more specifically focus on dreams in which a deity speaks directly to the dreamer. Such dream accounts are mentioned in prayers, historical records, literary texts and accounts of vows. Through this short survey of the textual evidence, both the nature and the possible function(s) of dreamt divine speech will be explored.

"NOW SEE HOW THE MIGHTY STORM-GOD MY LORD IS RUNNING BEFORE ME:" REVELATION OF DIVINE POWER IN HITTITE HISTORIOGRAPHY

Amir Gilan*

This chapter will explore several famous occurrences in which divine power was revealed to Hittite kings during battle.[1] One occurrence took place during the final confrontation between king Ḫattušili III and Urḫi-Teššub at the town of Šamuḫa. There, the goddess Šawoška's "divine plan" was revealed to Ḫattušili by the sudden collapse of a massive portion of the fortification wall defending Šamuḫa, leading to the capture of Urḫi-Teššub. A similar manifestation of divine power in "action" was revealed to Muršili II, Ḫattušili's father, in his third-year campaign against Uḫḫaziti, king of Arzawa. The event, a *lightning bolt* that was shot by the "Mighty" Storm-God before the campaign, bringing Uḫḫaziti to his knees and securing a Hittite victory, is reported in both the "Ten Year Annals" and the "Comprehensive Annals." Both revelations had considerable religious significance.

King Muršili II ascended the Hittite throne as a young, inexperienced prince. A virulent plague broke out in Ḫattuša during the reign of his father, the illustrious conqueror Šuppiluliuma I. The plague presumably took the life of Šuppiluliuma I and, shortly after him, the life of his eldest son and successor, Arnuwanda II, leaving a frightened Muršili on the throne of his deceased brother.[2] The death of Ḫannutti, the governor of the Lower Land and an experienced military commander, must have been a further blow to the young king, ridiculed by his enemies. Ḫannutti was ordered by Arnuwanda II to march up north to the Land of Išḫupitta, on the northern outskirts of the Upper Land, to restore order there.[3]

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[1] I warmly thank the organizers for their kind invitation to participate and to contribute to the conference. The contribution was supported by the Israel Science Foundation (grant No. 440/16, "The Hittites and Their Past: Forms of Historical Consciousness in Hittite Anatolia"). Abbreviations follow the Chicago Hittite Dictionary.

[2] The historical situation is outlined in T. BRYCE, *The Kingdom of the Hittites, New edition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 190–197. A ritual that was performed on the young Muršili upon his ascension to the throne, demonstrating his insecurity or ill-being, was edited by D. GRODDEK, "Ein Reinigungsritual für Muršili II. anläßlich seiner Thronbesteigung," *Hethitica* 15 (2002): 81–92.

[3] A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, Berlin, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1933, 18–19, T. BRYCE, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*, 190–192.

Upon his ascension to the throne, Muršili II was not only confronted with the task of establishing order in the Upper Land. He also had to investigate the causes of the plague in order to put an end to it. Some of his efforts are depicted in a series of prayers, known as the "Plague Prayers" of Muršili II, originating from different phases of his long reign.[4] Apparently, the plague continued to rage unhindered for more than two decades, likely in recurring outbursts, and must have decimated the population of Ḫattuša, carrying with it profound and far reaching consequences for Hittite society.[5]

In these prayers, among the most engaging and dramatic compositions in Hittite literature, the king disputes before the gods the severity of the punishment they continue to afflict on his kingdom and desperately seeks to learn the reasons for the apparent wrath of the gods, who allow the plague to continue. As the "Plague Prayers" of Muršili II reveal, the Hittite king was perfectly aware of the immediate, "natural" causes of the epidemic. It was probably brought to Ḫattuša by Egyptian captives carried off by Šuppiluliuma from Syria, in a punishment raid conducted in the Amka plain, in revenge of the death of his son Zannanza, infringing the Egyptian border:

> At that time too the Storm-god of Ḫattuša, my lord, by his verdict caused my father to prevail, and he defeated the infantry and the chariotry of Egypt and beat them. But when the prisoners of war who had been captured were led back to Ḫattuša, a plague broke out among the prisoners of war, and [they began] to die. When the prisoners of war were carried off to Ḫattuša, the prisoners of war brought the plague into Ḫattuša. From that day on people have been dying in Ḫattuša.[6]

As keenly observed by Singer in his introduction to the plague prayers, the immediate, "natural" causes of the plague were only of secondary importance to the author(s) of the prayers. They were primarily considered to be the instrument of punishment chosen by the gods.[7] The real grievance that lay at the heart of some of the prayers was the inappropriateness of that punishment.

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[4] I. SINGER, *Hittite Prayers*, Atlanta: SBL, 2002, 47–69. On the "chronology" of the plague see D. SÜRENHAGEN, *Paritätische Staatsverträge aus hethitischer Sicht*, Pavia: Gianni Iuculano Editore (Studia Mediterranea 5), 1985 and D. GRODDEK, "Muršili II, die große Feste und die 'Pest.' Überlegungen zur Anordnung der Fragmente der späteren Jahre seiner Regierung in den AM," in *Anatolia Antica. Studi in Memoria di Fiorella Imparati*, S. de Martino, F. Pecchioli Daddi (eds), Firenze: LoGisma, 2002, 329–338, both with earlier literature.

[5] As convincingly suggested by T. VAN DEN HOUT, "Institutions, Vernaculars, Publics: the Case of Second-Millennium Anatolia," in *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures*, S. Sanders (ed.), Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2006, 236–237, by decimating the urban center of the Empire, the plague may have caused the movement of more rural Luwian speaking populations into the center. This may have triggered the increase of Luwian speakers at the core of the Hittite Empire eventually paving the way to the disappearance of the Hittite language.

[6] Translation after I. SINGER, *Hittite Prayers*, 58, §5, with minor alterations.

[7] I. SINGER, *Hittite Prayers*, 47.

According to Muršili, Ḫattuša had already made enough restitution through the plague, suffering twenty-fold already, but the gods were not yet appeased.[8] It was therefore indispensable to find out what else continued to cause that fierce wrath of the gods. The information had to be disclosed by the gods themselves:

> [Or] if people have been dying because of some other reason, then let me either see it in a dream, or let it be established through an oracle, or let a man of god declare it, or, according to what I instructed all the priests, they shall regularly sleep holy. O Storm-god of Ḫattuša, save my life! Let the gods, my lords, show me their divine power! Let someone see it in a dream. Let the reason for which people have been dying be discovered. We are dangling from a point of a needle. O Storm-god of Ḫattuša, my lord, save my life, and may the plague be removed from Ḫattuša.[9]

As the prayers forcefully document, Muršili did not wait passively for a sign. Lengthy processes of oracular consultation were initiated in which various offences from the past were suggested as possible causes for the catastrophe. The oracles indicated various offences committed by Šuppiluliuma I, Muršili's father.[10] Šuppiluliuma's possible involvement in the murder of his brother, Tudḫaliya "the Younger" by the men of Ḫattuša was indicated in Muršili's "First" Plague Prayer, addressed to the assembly of the gods.[11] According to Muršili's "Second" Plague Prayer, addressed to the Storm-god of Ḫattuša (CTH 378.II), two other possible causes for the wrath of the gods were indicated by oracles and discovered in two ancient tablets. The first relates to the neglect of offerings to the Euphrates River during Šuppiluliuma's reign (§3), the second the violation of the so-called Kuruštama Treaty – a century old treaty between Ḫattuša and Egypt.[12] The violation occurred when Šuppiluliuma infringed the northern frontier of the Egyptian Empire, attacking towns in

[8] I. SINGER, *Hittite Prayers*, 60, §9.
[9] Translation after I. SINGER, *Hittite Prayers*, 60, §11, see also 52, §§6-7.
[10] An offence that possibly occurred during Šuppiluliuma's reign is also mentioned in a prayer by his great grandson, Tudḫaliya "IV," edited now by E. RIEKEN *et al*. (eds), hethiter.net/: CTH 385.9 (INTR 2016-01-18). The prayer's second paragraph, KBo 12.58 + KBo 13.162 obv. 11-13, is very fragmentary but suggests that the Sun-goddess of the Arinna was angry on account of a lost divine image, and that this divine image was lost years ago, during the reigns of Tudhaliyas father, his grandfather, Muršili II, or even his great grandfather, Šuppiluliuma I.
[11] CTH 378.I, §§2-3, I. SINGER, *Hittite Prayers*, 61–62. On this episode see H. Klengel, *Geschichte des hethitischen Reiches*, Leiden: Brill (HdO I/34), 1999, 148 and especially D. GRODDEK, "Anfang und Ende des Ersten Pestgebetes Muršilis II," *Res Antiquae* 6 (2009): 99–106 with new readings of the passage.
[12] Edited by I. SINGER, "The Kuruštama Treaty Revisited," in *Šarnikzel. Hethitologische Studien zum Gedenken an Emil Orgetorix Forrer*, D. Groddek, S. Rößle (eds), Dresden: Verlag der TU Dresden, 2004, 591–607. See also D. GRODDEK, "'Ägypten sei dem hethitischen Lande Bundesgenosse!' Zur Textherstellung zweier Paragraphen des Kuruštama-Vertrages," *Göttinger Miszellen* 218 (2008): 37–43.

the Amka valley in revenge of the death of his son.[13] The same episode also appears in Muršili's fragmentary "Fifth" Plague Prayer, addressed to the assembly of the gods.[14]

Even if composed later in his reign, the Plague Prayers of Muršili II are undoubtedly indicative to his state of mind upon his ascension to the throne. Muršili's first action as a great king is also suggestive of his state of trepidation. According to the prologue of his "Ten Year Annals,"[15] Muršili's first deed was to celebrate the regular festivals of the Sun-goddess of Arinna and to seek her support before setting out to confront his enemies.[16] The festivals of the Sun-goddess of Arinna were not celebrated on time by Muršili's father, Šuppiluliuma, who had to remain in Mitanni and were overdue. This circumstance may have motivated the composition of the "Ten Year Annals" later on. As the prologue and later the epilogue of the composition illustrate, the intention of the "Ten Year Annals" was precisely to document the story of how the Sun-goddess of Arinna stood by the young king throughout the first ten years of his reign. The wording of the prologue is illuminative to the linkage between the festivals and the text:

> When I, My Majesty, sat on my father's throne, before I had set out against any of the enemy foreign lands that were in a state of hostilities with me, I cared for the regular festivals of the Sun-goddess of Arinna, my lady, exclusively and celebrated them. I held up the hand to the Sun-goddess of Arinna, my lady, and said as follows: "O Sun-goddess of Arinna, my lady, the enemy foreign lands who have called me a child and belittled me, have begun seeking to take away the borders of the Sun-goddess of Arinna, my lady. Stand by me, O Sun-goddess of Arinna, my lady. Destroy those enemy foreign lands before me." The Sun-goddess of Arinna heard my words and stood by me. After I sat down on my father's throne, in ten years I vanquished these enemy foreign lands and destroyed them.[17]

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[13] §§4-5, I. SINGER, *Hittite Prayers*, 58.

[14] CTH 379, I. SINGER, *Hittite Prayers*, 67–68. A different ordering of the prayers is suggested by R. H. BEAL, "The Ten-Year Annals of Muršili II," in *The Context of Scripture Volume Two: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, W. W. Hallo (ed.), Leiden: Brill, 2000, 83.

[15] Edited by A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, and later by J.-P. GRÉLOIS, "Les Annales décennales de Mursili II (CTH 61, 1)," *Hethitica* 9 (1988): 17-145. A recent English translation is R. H. BEAL, "The Ten-Year Annals of Muršili II," 82–90.

[16] A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 20–21.

[17] KBo 3.4 i 19-29, edited by A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 20–23, Translation after R. H. BEAL, "The Ten-Year Annals of Muršili II," 84 with some alterations: (19) *ma-aḫ-ḫa-an-ma-za-kán* ^{d}UTU-*ŠI A-NA* ^{GIŠ}GU.ZA *A-BI-IA e-eš-ḫa-at nu-mu a-ra-aḫ-zé-na-aš* KUR.KUR ^{LÚ}KÚR (20) *ku-i-e-eš ku-u-ru-ri-ia-aḫ-ḫe-er nu A-NA* KUR ^{LÚ}KÚR *na-wi$_5$ ku-it-ma-an ku-e-da-ni-ik-ki* (21) *pa-a-un nu A-NA ŠA* ^{d}UTU ^{URU}*A-RI-IN-NA-pát* GAŠAN-*IA* SAG.UŠ-*aš A-NA* EZEN$^{ḪI.A}$ EGIR-*an ti-ia-nu-un* (22) [*n*]*a-aš-za i-ia-nu-un nu A-NA* ^{d}UTU ^{URU}*A-RI-IN-NA* GAŠAN-*IA* ŠU-*an ša-ra-a e-ep-pu-un* (23) *nu ki-iš-ša-an AQ-BI* ^{d}UTU ^{URU}*A-RI-IN-NA* GAŠAN-*IA a-ra-aḫ-zé-na-aš-wa-mu-za* KUR.KUR ^{LÚ}KÚR *ku-i-e-eš* (24) DUMU-*la-an ḫal*^{l}*-ze-eš-ser nu-wa-mu-za te-ep-nu-uš-ker nu-wa tu-el ŠA* ^{d}UTU ^{URU}*A-RI-IN-NA* (25) GAŠAN-*IA* ZAG$^{ḪI.A}$ *da-an-na ša-an-ḫi-iš-ke-u-an da-a-ir nu-*

The "Ten Year Annals" is one of the three major historical works of Muršili II, undeniably representing the pinnacle of Hittite historiography. The other two are his "Comprehensive Annals" and the "Deeds" of Šuppiluliuma.[18] All three compositions belong to the most productive genre of historical writing, attested sporadically from the beginning of the Old Hittite Kingdom to the end of the Empire in the 12th century BCE. The Hittite emic designation of these compositions was *pešnatar*, "Manly Deeds," documenting, in varying degrees of detail, the settlement of political conflicts by the Hittite king, mostly in the form of "just" and successful military campaigns. The "Manly Deeds" are represented in its purest form by the earliest text of the genre, the "Manly Deeds" of Ḫattušili I, dating to the early phases of the Old Kingdom, but available only in later, "modernized" Empire Period copies.[19] The "Manly Deeds" of the king, his campaigns, are often characterized by divine support and by the richness of the booty taken from the enemy. The genre provided a platform to display the political wisdom of the Hittite king, his just conduct, military skills, and religious piety.[20] "Manly Deeds" texts are usually, but not exclusively, arranged chronologically according to the king's regnal years. They are therefore termed annals in scholarly literature although the regnal years are never numbered nor dated. The compositions usually depict the deeds of the reigning king. In several cases, however, the "deeds" of the immediate predecessors are narrated as well. The "Manly Deeds" of Šuppiluliuma, narrated by his son Muršili II, but also recording the deeds of his grandfather, is one notable example. Thus, the Hittite "Manly Deeds" were mainly concerned with contemporary history, intended for the consumption of contemporaries but especially for future generations. They therefore convey a distinct notion of historical

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wa-mu ^{d}UTU ^{URU}*A-RI-IN-NA* GAŠAN-*IA* (26) *kat-ta-an ti-ia nu-wa-mu-kán u-ni a-ra-aḫ-zé-na-aš* KUR.KUR ^{LÚ}KÚR *pé-ra-an ku-en-ni* (27) *nu-mu* ^{d}UTU ^{URU}*A-RI-IN-NA me-mi-an iš-ta-ma-aš-ta na-aš-mu kat-ta-an ti-ia-at* (28) *nu-za-kán A-NA* ^{GIŠ}GU.ZA *A-BI-IA ku-wa-pí e-eš-ḫa-at nu-za ke-e a-ra-aḫ-zé-na-aš* (29) KUR.KUR$^{MEŠ\ LÚ}$KÚR *I-NA* MU.10^{KAM} *tar-aḫ-ḫu-un na-at-kán ku-e-nu-un*.

[18] The former is edited by A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*. The latter is edited by H. G. GÜTERBOCK, "The Deeds of Suppiluliuma as Told by His Son, Mursili II," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 10 (1956): 41–68, 75–98, 107–130 and G. F. DEL MONTE, *Le gesta di Suppiluliuma. Traslitterazione, traduzione e commento*, Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 2008. The best study of these texts remains H. CANCIK, *Grundzüge der hethitischen und alttestamentarischen Geschichtsschreibung*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1976.

[19] The Hittite version is edited by S. DE MARTINO, *Annali e Res Gestae Antico Ittiti*, Pavia: Italian University Press, 2003, 21–79. The Akkadian version by E. DEVECCHI, *Gli Annali di Ḫattušili I nella Versione Accadica*, Pavia: Italian University Press, 2005. A recent English translation is G. BECKMAN, "Annals of Ḫattušili I," in *The Ancient Near East: Historical Sources in Translation*, M. Chavalas (ed.), Malden: Blackwell, 2006, 219–222.

[20] H. A. HOFFNER Jr., "Histories and Historians of the Ancient Near East: The Hittites," *Orientalia* 49 (1980): 311–312.

consciousness: the awareness of the importance of the deeds portrayed in them to the future.[21]

Divine support is a central component of the genre. In the historiographical works of Muršili II it is often expressed in formulaic phraseology, listing the deities that "ran before" (*peran ḫuwai-*) the king in his campaigns. The formula is recurring throughout the compositions, each composition is characterized by a distinct list of deities. In the "Ten Year Annals" the Sun-goddess of Arinna, the "Mighty" Storm-god, Mezzulla and all the gods ran before the king. In the "Comprehensive Annals" it is slightly modified, with the "Mighty" Storm-god heading the list of deities, followed by the Sun-goddess of Arinna, the Storm-god of Ḫattuša, the tutelary deity of Ḫattuša, the Storm-god of the army, *IŠTAR* of the battlefield, and all the gods.[22]

There are, however, instances of divine intervention which are depicted in greater detail in Muršili's historiographical works. Perhaps the most important such occasion occurred on Muršili's campaign against Uḫḫaziti, the king of Arzawa, a major West Anatolian Kingdom. Muršili embarked on his campaign against Arzawa in his third year, after spending the first two years of his reign combatting Kaška people in Northern Anatolia, marching against and burning rebelling towns in the lands of Turmitta, Tipiya and Išḫupitta.[23] Uḫḫaziti, king of Arzawa, was therefore the first major opponent the young Hittite king had to come to grips with:

> From Palḫuišša I came back to Ḫattuša. I set my infantry and horse-troops in motion and in that same year I went against Arzawa. I sent a messenger to Uḫḫaziti. I wrote to him as follows: "Because I asked you to return my subjects who came to you and you did not give them back and you kept calling me a child and you kept belittling me. Now, come, we will fight. Let the Storm-god, my lord, decide our lawsuit." When I had gone and when I had arrived in Lawaša, the "Mighty" Storm-god, my lord, showed his divine plan. He shot a *lightning bolt*. My troops saw the *lightning bolt* and the land of Arzawa saw it. The *lightning bolt* went and struck Arzawa. It struck Apaša, the city of Uḫḫaziti. It set Uḫḫaziti on his knees and he became ill. As Uḫḫaziti became ill, he did not subsequently come against me for battle.[24]

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[21] On the intended audiences of the "Manly Deeds" see most recently T. VAN DEN HOUT, "'Two Old Tablets:' Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in Hittite Society," in *Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in the Ancient World*, K. A. Raaflaub (ed.), Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2014, 176–181.

[22] H. A. HOFFNER Jr., "Histories and Historians of the Ancient Near East: The Hittites," 314; R. H. BEAL, "The Ten-Year Annals of Muršili II," 83.

[23] A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 22–39.

[24] KBo 3.4+ ii 7-22, A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 44–49; Translation after R. H. BEAL, "The ten-Year Annals of Muršili II," 85 with some alterations: (7) *nam-ma* ^{URU}*Pal-ḫu-iš-ša-az* EGIR-*pa I-NA* ^{URU}KÙ.BABBAR-*TI ú-wa-nu*$^{!}$*-un* (8) *nu-za* ÉRIN.MEŠ ANŠE.KUR.RA.MEŠ *ni-*

The "Comprehensive Annals" also depict the extraordinary event. According to the more comprehensive, but fragmentary version, it took place while the king arrived at the river Sakarya, classical Sangarios, Hittite Šeḫiriya:[25]

> […] I marched to [the Land] of Arzawa. When I […] at the river Šeḫiriya. [the Mighty Storm-god] showed his divine plan. He shot a [*lightning bolt*]. The Land of Ḫattuša saw it from behind whereas the Land of Arzawa saw it [approaching]. That same *lightning bolt* went and struck Apašša, Uḫḫaziti's town, and it also struck Uḫḫaziti. A serious illness ailed him and it paralyzed his knees.[26]

Consequently, Uḫḫaziti was forced to send his son Piyama-Kuruntiya to confront Muršili at the river Aštarpa in Walma. However, Piyama-Kuruntiya was defeated by the Hittite king who continued to chase him into the land of Arzawa and into the capital Apaša. Uḫḫaziti offered no resistance and fled across the sea to the islands. The population of Apaša fled as well.[27]

There is no reason to doubt the verisimilitude of the dramatic occurrence as it is reported in the annals.[28] As we have seen, the "authors" of both the "Ten

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ni-in-ku-un nam-ma a-pé-e-da-ni MU-*ti I-NA* KUR *AR-ZA-U-WA* (9) *i-ia-an-ni-ia-nu-un-pát A-NA* ^{m}U-*uḫ-ḫa*-LÚ-*ma* ^{LÚ}*ṬE$_4$-MU u-i-ia-nu-un* (10) *nu-uš-ši ḫa-at-ra-a-nu-un* ARAD^{MEŠ}-*IA-wa-at-ták-kán ku-i-e-eš an-da ú-e-er* (11) *nu-wa-ra-aš-ta* EGIR-*pa ku-it ú-e-wa-ak-ke-nu-un nu-wa-ra-aš-mu* EGIR-*pa* (12) EGIR-pa *Ú-UL pa-iš-ta nu-wa-mu-za* DUMU-*la-an ḫal-ze-eš-še-eš-ta* (13) *nu-wa-mu-za te-ep-nu-uš-ke-et ki-nu-na-wa e-ḫu nu-wa za-aḫ-ḫi-ia-u-wa-aš-ta-ti* (14) *nu-wa-an-na-aš* ^{d}10 *BE-LÍ-IA DI-NAM ḫa-an-na-a-ú* (15) *ma-aḫ-ḫa-an-ma i-ia-aḫ-ḫa-at nu* GIM-*an I-NA* $^{ḪUR.SAG}$*LA-WA-ŠA a-ar-ḫu-un* (16) *nu-za* ^{d}10 NIR.GÁL *EN-IA pa-ra-a ḫa-an-da-an-da-a-tar te-ek-ku-uš-ša-nu-ut* (17) *nu* ^{GIŠ}*kal-mi-ša-na-an ši-ia-a-it nu* ^{GIŠ}*kal-mi-ša-na-an am-me-el* KARAŠ$^{HI.A}$-*ia* (18) *uš-ke-et* KUR ^{URU}*Ar-za-u-wa-ia-an uš-ke-et nu* ^{GIŠ}*kal-mi-ša-na-aš pa-it* (19) *nu* KUR ^{URU}*AR-ZA-U-WA* GUL-*aḫ-ta ŠA* ^{m}*U-uḫ-ḫa*-LÚ-*ia* ^{URU}*A-pa-a-ša-an* URU-*an* GUL-*aḫ-ta* (20) ^{m}*U-uḫ-ḫa*-LÚ-*na ge-nu-uš-šu-uš a-še-eš-ta na-aš ir-ma-li-ia-at-ta-at* (21) *nu ma-aḫ-ḫa-an* ^{m}*U-uḫ-ḫa*-LÚ-*iš* GIG-*at na-aš-mu nam-ma za-aḫ-ḫi-ia* (22) *me-na-aḫ-ḫa-an-da Ú-UL ú-et*. See also M. WEINFELD, "Divine Intervention in War in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East," in *History, Historiography and Interpretation. Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures*, H. Tadmor, M. Weinfeld (eds), Jerusalem: The Magness Press, 1983, 139.

[25] M. WEEDEN, "A Hittite Tablet from Büklükale," *Anatolian Archaeological Studies* 18 (2013): 20.

[26] KUB 14.15 ii 1'-6', edited by A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 46–49: (1') […KUR *A*]*R-ʿZAʾ-U-WA pa-a-ʿunʾ nu ma-aḫ-ḫa-an I-NA* ^{ÍD}*Še-ḫi-ʿriʾ-ia* (2') […*nu-za* ^{d}10 NIR.GÁ]L *pa-ra-a ḫa-an-ta-an-ʿdaʾ-tar ti-ik-ku-uš-nu-ut* (3') [*nu* ^{GIŠ}*kal-mi-iš-na-a*]*n ši-ia-it na-an-kán* EGIR-*an-da* KUR ^{URU}*ḪA-AT-TI uš-ke-et* (4') [*me-na-aḫ-ḫa-an-d*]*a-ma-an-kán* KUR *AR-ZA-U-WA uš-ke-et nu* ^{GIŠ}*kal-mi-iš-na-aš pa-it-pát* (5') [*nu* ^{URU}*A*]-ʿ*pa-aš*ʾ*-ša-an ŠA* ^{m}*Uḫ-ḫa*-LÚ URU-*an* GUL-*aḫ-ta* ^{m}U-*uḫ-ḫa*-LÚ-*in-na* GUL-*aḫ-ta* (6') *na-an i-da-lu-uš* GIG-*aš*$^{!}$ *iš-tar-ak-ta na-aš ge-nu-uš-ši du-ud-ʿdu-wa-reʾ-eš-ta*. Compare also HED K: 27 and HEG T: 485 for both versions.

[27] A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 50–53; T. BRYCE, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*, 193–195.

[28] See already A. GILAN, "Were there Cannibals in Syria? History and Fiction in an Old Hittite Literary Text," in *Literature and Culture in the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece, Rome and the Near East*, E. Cingano, L. Milano (eds), Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N. Editrice e Libreria (Quaderni del Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità e Del Vicino Oriente dell'Università Ca' Foscari), 2008, 278. On the verisimilitude of Hittite historiography in general see the different opinions of H. WOLF, "The Historical Reliability of the Hittite Annals," in *Faith, Tradition, and History: Old*

Year Annals" and the "Comprehensive Annals" vouch to the authenticity of the account by claiming that everyone, both Hittites and Arzawans, saw the *lightning bolt* strike Apaša. In the "Comprehensive Annals," Muršili even takes pain to name the source that informed him about Uḫḫaziti's illness, recapitulating the details in direct speech. Apparently, he questioned Mašḫuiluwa, the appointed ruler of the Arzawan kingdom Mira-Kuwaliya, about the occurrence when the latter met the Hittite king on his way to Arzawa:

> [Whe]n I arrived in Aura, Mašḫuiluwa, who [he]ld (the town of) […], drove towards me. I questioned him […]: "The thunder[?][29] of the deity struck Uḫḫaziti and [a serious illness] afflicted him. [It] paralyzed [his knees]."[30]

The historiographic account in both the "Ten Year Annals" and in the "Comprehensive Annals" does not reveal much on the psychological and religious impact that that *lightning bolt* must have exercised on the young king. But in fact, as convincingly elucidated by Popko, the *lightning bolt* that was shot by the "Mighty" Storm-god in the mountains of Lawaša in Muršili's third year, bringing his first serious nemesis, Uḫḫaziti, king of Arzawa, to his knees, had far-reaching religious consequences.[31] The Storm-god with the epithet NIR.GÁL, heth/luw. *muwa(t)talli-* "awe-inspiring," "terrifying," "mighty"[32] who shot the *lightning bolt* according to the annals, was later on raised to prominence by Muršili II, finally to become his "patron deity." Muršili even named one of his sons, who ultimately became his successor, Muwatalli, likely after him. One may even suggest that it was the throwing of the *lightning bolt* that decided the campaign against Arzawa that gave that Storm-god the epithet

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Testament Historiography in Its Near Eastern Context, A. R. Millard *et al*. (eds), Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994, 159–164; G. BECKMAN, "The Limits of Credulity (Presidential Address)," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 125 (2005): 343–352; J. KLINGER, "Geschichte oder Geschichten – zum literarischen Charakter der hethitischen Historiographie" in *Historiographie in der Antike*, K.-P. Adam (ed.), Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008, 27–47 and I. SINGER, "Between Scepticism and Credulity: In Defence of Hittite Historiography," in *The Calm before the Storm. Selected Writings of Itamar Singer on the End of the Late Bronze Age in Anatolia and the Levant*, B. J. Collins (ed.), Atlanta: SBL, 2011, 731–766.

[29] Tentatively read by A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 48. See also his commentary on pages 212–214.

[30] KUB 14.15 ii 10'-14', edited by A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 48–49: (10') … […*nu ma-a*]*ḫ-ḫa-an* (11') *I-NA* ^{URU}*A-Ú-RA a-ar-ḫu-un nu* ^{m}*Mas-ḫu-i-lu-wa-aš ku-iš* ^{URU}[… *ḫar*]*-ta* (12') *nu-mu me-na-aḫ-ḫ*[*a-a*]*n-da u-un-ni-iš-ta na-an pu-u-nu-uš-šu-un* […]x (13') $^{r m}$*U-uḫ-ḫa*-LÚ-*in-wa* KAxIM[?] DINGIR-*LIM* GUL-*aḫ-ta nu-wa-ra-an*[*i-da-lu-uš* GIG-*aš i*]*š-tar-ak-ki-ia-ta-at* (14') [*nu-wa-ra-aš ge-nu-uš-ši*] ^{r}*du-ud-du-wa-ri*$^{-}$*iš-ta*.

[31] M. POPKO, "Muršili II, der mächtige Wettergott und Katapa," *Altorientalische Forschungen* 28 (2001): 147–153. See also I. SINGER, "On Luwians and Hittites: Review of H. C. Melchert, The Luwians (2003)," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 62 (2005): 441.

[32] On the epithet, F. STARKE, *Untersuchungen zur Stammbildung des keilschrift-luwischen Nomens*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1990, 172–174, CHD L-N: 316–317.

"mighty," "awe-inspiring," "terrifying" in the first place. It was the dramatic demonstration of divine power in Muršili's third year, witnessed by a large crowd, that shaped the religious sentiments of the young king throughout his life, setting in train the growing prominence of the "Mighty" Storm-god in the royal palace. As we have seen, in the "Comprehensive Annals," composed after the "Ten Year Annals," the "Mighty" Storm-god is already heading the list of deities.[33]

It is interesting to note that in the letter sent by the young Muršili to Uḫḫaziti before the Arzawa campaign, cited in quoted speech in the "Ten Year Annals" above,[34] the Hittite king challenges Uḫḫaziti to combat, calling for the "Storm-god my Lord" (^{d}10 *BE-LÍ-IA*), not yet for the "Mighty" Storm-god (^{d}10 NIR.GÁL) to judge the litigation between them. If the wording of the message is indeed authentic and such a letter was ever sent, this could lend further support to the assertion that the "Mighty" Storm-god only won this epithet after the *lightning bolt* shot at the Arzawa campaign was attributed to him.[35] There are, however, good reasons to doubt the authenticity of such a letter. As argued by Cancik in his classic study of Hittite Historiography, quoted communications and reported speeches in Hittite historiography should not be taken at face value, but rather as additives to the narrative, "um die Darstellung persönlicher, lebendiger, abwechslungsreicher und dramatischer zu gestalten."[36]

An almost exact phrasing is found in another major Hittite historical text, the so-called Autobiography or Apology of Ḫattušili "III" (CTH 81), the son of Muršili II and Muwatalli's younger brother. The composition, one of the most unique, important and best-known historical compositions that passed on to us from the Hittite world, was already edited, with several other related texts, by

[33] As already noted by M. POPKO, "Muršili II, der mächtige Wettergott und Katapa," 149.
[34] KBo 3.4 ii 9-14, A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 46–47.
[35] As the ritual fragment KUB 20.65 reveals, the "Mighty" Storm-god (^{d}10 NIR.GÁL) was conceptualized as an epithet of Teššub, as showed by M. POPKO, "Muršili II, der mächtige Wettergott und Katapa," 150. See also P. TARACHA, *Religions of Second Millennium Anatolia*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009, 92–93 and n. 480. The deity should probably be distinguished from the ^{d}*MU-WA-AT-TA-AL-LI* attested in KUB 40.2 obv. 16 and rev. 10. The text is a renewal charter of a cult donation by two Kizzuwatnian kings, Talzu and Šunaššura, by an unnamed Hittite king, possibly Šuppiluliuma I. The document, edited by A. GÖTZE, *Kizzuwatna and the Problem of Hittite Geography*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940, 60–71, largely follows the wording of an ancient Kizzuwatnian tablet, concerning a detailed cult foundation to three deities, Muwanu, Muwattalli and the "new god" (DINGIR GIBIL) on mount Išḫara, in connection with the temple of Išḫara of Neriša which was located on that mountain.
[36] H. CANCIK, *Grundzüge der hethitischen und alttestamentarischen Geschichtsschreibung*, 138–139.

Götze.[37] Götze published additional texts and fragments five years later.[38] Further related texts were edited by Ünal in his comprehensive study of Ḫattušili "III."[39] The definitive edition of the Autobiography remains Otten's (1981), who meticulously reconstructed the composition from the various manuscripts.[40] There are several translations of the "Autobiography," some of them relatively recent.[41]

The composition is relatively well-preserved. It was often copied in antiquity, in one-tablet and two-tablet editions, documenting the importance of the "Autobiography" already at the time of its composition. Most scholars agree that the text was written late, even towards the end of Ḫattušili's reign, when aging rulers often tend to introspect.[42] Recent studies, emphasizing the political, apologetic nature of the composition, are more critical towards the late dating of the text.[43]

The Autobiography or Apology of Ḫattušili "III" is often regarded as a masterpiece of political apologetic literature, revealing Ḫattušili's cunning and cold-blooded political ascension, resembling Richard III as portrayed by William Shakespeare.[44] According to this prevailing interpretation, the main aim of the composition was to justify the cold elimination of his political rivals, his unlawful usurpation of the Hittite throne, and the subsequent securing of the enthronement of his son, Tudḫaliya IV. The "Autobiography," however, is

[37] A. GÖTZE, *Ḫattušiliš. Der Bericht über seine Thronbesteigung nebst den Paralleltexten*, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1925.
[38] A. GÖTZE, *Neue Bruchstücke zum großen Text des Hattušiliš und den Paralleltexten*, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1930.
[39] A. ÜNAL, *Ḫattušili III. Teil I, Band I: Historischer Abriß*, Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1974 and A. ÜNAL, *Ḫattušili III. Teil I, Band II: Quellen und Indices*, Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1974.
[40] H. OTTEN, *Die Apologie Hattusilis III. Das Bild der Überlieferung*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten 23), 1981.
[41] T. VAN DEN HOUT, "Apology of Ḫattušili III (1.77)," in *The Context of Scripture, Volume One: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, W.W. Hallo, K. L. Younger Jr. (eds), Leiden: Brill, 1997, 199–204; A. KNAPP, *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East*, Atlanta: SBL, 2015, 125–148.
[42] H. CANCIK, *Grundzüge der hethitischen und alttestamentarischen Geschichtsschreibung*, 42; H. Tadmor, "Autobiographical Apology in the Royal Assyrian Literature," in: *History, Historiography and Interpretation: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures*, H. Tadmor, M. Weinfeld (eds.), Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1983, 37–38, 54–57, P. H. J. HOUWINK TEN CATE, "The Bronze Tablet of Tudhaliyas IV and its Geographical and Historical Relations," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 82 (1992): 265–267.
[43] A. KNAPP, *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East*, 159, G. BECKMAN, "Hattušili III between Gods and Men," in: *Studies in Honour of Ahmet Ünal*, S. Erkut, Ö. Sir Gavaz (eds), Istanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları, 2016, 69–74.
[44] V. PARKER, "Reflexions on the Career of Ḫattušiliš III until the Time of this Coup d'État," *Altorientalische Forschungen* 26 (1998): 269.

primarily a deeply religious composition.[45] The older scholarly literature, much less possessed with notions of propaganda or political legitimization than the present one, was more attentive to the religious nature of the "Autobiography." In his first edition of the text, Götze suggested that the composition was "das älteste Beispiel einer Aretalogie."[46] Cancik designates the composition as a prayer to the goddess Šawoška of Šamuḫa.[47]

The composition famously begins with a praise to the goddess Šawoška of Šamuḫa, revealing its intention to publicly declare its "divine plan" (*parā ḫandandatar*). The intended audience of the text is surprisingly wide and includes not only Ḫattušili's immediate heirs but also mankind in general: "Šawoška's divine plan (*parā ḫandandatar*) I will proclaim. Let every man hear it!"[48]

The religious and theological importance of the phrase *parā ḫandandatar* "divine plan" has been frequently studied in modern scholarship.[49] As we have seen earlier, the *lightning bolt* thrown by the "Mighty" Storm-god, striking the Arzawan capital and paralyzing its king Uḫḫaziti, was also considered as a revelation of a divine plan (*parā ḫandandatar*) by the author of both the "Ten Year" and the "Comprehensive" Annals.[50] But whereas the concept of divine plan (*parā ḫandandatar*) appears only marginally in the historiographical works of Muršili II, it occupies a central role in the "Autobiography." Indeed, the composition delivers on its promise and continues to recount the benevolence shown to Ḫattušili by the goddess throughout the stations of his career.

According to the "Autobiography," Ḫattušili's relationship with Šawoška began early in his life. Influenced by a dream provoked by the goddess, Muršili II gave his son to her service in an early age and Ḫattušili became her priest. The intervention of the goddess practically saved or at least prolonged Ḫattušili's life. Šawoška of Šamuḫa had come to his rescue ever since in battle, in support

[45] See now the excellent discussion of D. SÜRENHAGEN, "Die "Apologie" Hattusilis III. Überlegungen zur Gattungszugehörigkeit und Funktion eines umstrittenen Textes" in: *Das Erzählen in frühen Hochkulturen II. Eine Archäologie der narrativen Sinnbildung*, H. Roeder (ed), Padeborn: Wilhelm Fink, 47–58.

[46] A. GÖTZE, *Ḫattušiliš. Der Bericht über seine Thronbesteigung nebst den Paralleltexten*, 55.

[47] H. CANCIK, *Grundzüge der hethitischen und alttestamentarischen Geschichtsschreibung*, 41–46.

[48] H. OTTEN, *Die Apologie Hattusilis III. Das Bild der Überlieferung*, 4–5.

[49] See already A. GÖTZE, *Ḫattušiliš. Der Bericht über seine Thronbesteigung nebst den Paralleltexten*, 52–55, H. CANCIK, *Grundzüge der hethitischen und alttestamentarischen Geschichtsschreibung*, 44–46 and most recently A. MOUTON, "Sur la différenciation entre rêve et *parā handandatar* dans les textes hittites," in: *Belkis Dinçol ve Ali Dinçol'a armağan = Vita: Festschrift in Honor of Belkis Dinçol and Ali Dinçol*, M. Doğan-Alparslan *et al*. (eds), Istanbul: Ege Yayınları, 2007, 523–531.

[50] KBo 3.4 ii 16 and KUB 14.15 ii 2 respectively, A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 46–49. The term *parā ḫandandatar* also appears in KBo 4.4 i 46 and ii 76.

of his attempts to defend the Upper Land against the Kaška tribes, as well as in the ongoing altercation with Arma-Tarḫunta, his nemesis. The goddess also acted as Ḫattušili's match-maker. The parallel text, KBo 6.29+ i 16–21 is illuminative, describing Ḫattušili's decision to marry Puduḫeba in the following manner:

> Puduḫeba, maid of Šawoška of Lawazantiya, was the daughter of Pendib-Šarri, SANGA-priest of Šawoška. And her also I did not take in marriage in the heat of passion/out of my own will. I took her at the command of the goddess. The goddess assigned her to me in a dream.[51]

The composition ends with a cult foundation for Šawoška of Šamuḫa, securing for eternity the endowment of the confiscated estates of Arma-Tarḫunta to the deity and exempting it from taxes and corvée obligations.[52] Ḫattušili also gave Tudḫaliya, his son and heir to the throne, to the service of the goddess, appointing him governor of her estate. The appointment was either made in order to secure the ascension of Tudḫaliya to the throne, to secure the future of the cult foundation, or both.[53]

The greatest manifestation of Šawoška's divine plan (*pāra ḫandandatar*) was Ḫattušili's successful overthrow of the reigning king, his nephew Urḫi-Teššub. Ḫattušili's acts are presented in the text, in the best Hittite historiographic tradition, in reported speech, soliloquy (self-talk) and cited communication:

> But when I became hostile to him, I did not commit a moral offence by revolting against him on the chariot or by revolting against him within (his) house. (No,) in a manly way I declared to him: "You opposed me. You (are) a Great King, whereas I (am) king of the single fortress that you left me. So, come! Šawoška of Šamuḫa and the Storm-god of Nerik will judge us."[54]

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[51] KBo 6.29+ i 16–21, A. GÖTZE, *Ḫattušiliš. Der Bericht über seine Thronbesteigung nebst den Paralleltexten*, 46–47: (16) … ^{f}*Pu-du-ḫé-pa-aš-ma* (17) *ŠA* ^{d}*IŠTAR* ^{URU}*LA-WA-ZA-AN-TI-IA* GÉME-*aš* DUMU.MUNUS ^{m}*Bé-en-ti-ip*-LUGAL (18) ^{LÚ}SANGA ^{d}*IŠTAR e-eš-ta nu-za a-pu-u-un-na* (19) *AŠ-ˊŠUMˋ DAM-UT-*TIM* mar-ri Ú-UL da-aḫ-ḫu-un* (20) *IŠ-TU INIM* DINGIR-*LIM-za-an da-aḫ-ḫu-un* DINGIR-*LIM-an-mu* Ù-*it* (21) *ḫe-en-ek-ta*. See also CHD L–N: 185 and P. M. GOEDEGEBUURE, *The Hittite Demonstratives: Studies in Deixis, Topics and Focus*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014, 466.

[52] H. OTTEN, *Die Apologie Hattusilis III. Das Bild der Überlieferung*, 28–31, iv 71–89; T. VAN DEN HOUT, *The Purity of Kingship. An Edition of CTH 569 and Related Hittite Oracle Inquiries of Tuthaliya IV*, Leiden: Brill (DMOA 25), 1998, 62.

[53] F. IMPARATI, "Apology of Ḫattušili III or Designation of His Successor?," in *Studio historiae ardens. Ancient Near Eastern Studies Presented to Philo H. J. Houwink ten Cate on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, T. van den Hout, J. de Roos (eds), Leiden: Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 74, 1995, 143–158.

[54] KUB 1.1++ iii 66'-72', H. OTTEN, *Die Apologie Hattusilis III. Das Bild der Überlieferung*, 22–23, translation after T. VAN DEN HOUT, "Apology of Ḫattušili III," 203: (66') [(*ku-ru-ri-ia-aḫ-ḫu-un-ma-aš-ši* GIM-*an nu*)] *a-pa-a*-[(*at pa-ap-ra-tar Ú-UL* DÙ-*nu-un*)] (67') [(*na-an-kán A-NA*

The final and decisive showdown between Urḫi-Teššub and Ḫattušili took place in the Upper Land and it was the Goddess herself that famously locked up Urḫi-Teššub in Šamuḫa "like a pig in a sty."[55] The parallel text, KBo 6.29+ ii 31–36, has more details and an even livelier simile. Moreover, it suggests that just like the "Mighty" Storm-god who shot his thunderbolt at the Arzawan king in the mountains of Lawaša, Šawoška's intervention in Hittite history took here a recognizable form as well, an extraordinary event that could have been witnessed by everyone on sight:

> At the time I caught up with him, a wooden fortification wall of 40 *gipeššar* came down and Šawoška of Šamuḫa, My Lady, caught him like a fish in a net, bound him and handed him over to me![56]

The omission of the details concerning the collapse of the fortifications from the "Autobiography" is puzzling. It has been long recognized that KBo 6.29+ was composed prior to the "Autobiography." As convincingly argued by Schmid, the cult foundation for Šawoška of Šamuḫa was in fact already regulated in the parallel text, KBo 6.29+, and not in the "Autobiography," where the endowment is only outlined in retrospective.[57] The cult endowment for the deity is also regulated in greater detail in the former text. Moreover, the prince that was designated to the priesthood of Šawoška of Šamuḫa was not yet named in KBo 6.29+.[58] A comparison of the two texts also shows that the "author" of the "Autobiography" set himself a different goal. The "Autobiography" is a product of religious reflection, written in retrospective, with the specific aim of proclaiming Šawoška's divine plan (*parā ḫandandatar*).[59] It is therefore surprising that the "author" of the "Autobiography" chose not to include the religiously more significant version given in KBo 6.29+ in the later composition. His reasons, however, must remain unknown.

GIŠGIGIR *wa-ag-ga-ri-ia-nu-un na-aš-ma-an-kán* ŠÀ É-*T*)]*I* (68') [(*wa-ak-ka$_4$-ri-ia-nu-un* LÚ-*ni-li-iš-ši wa-tar-na-aḫ-ḫu-un šu-ul-li-ia-at-wa-mu-ká*)]*n* (69') [(*nu-wa-za zi-ik* LUGAL.GAL *am-m*)]*u-uk-ma-wa-kán* [(1-*EN ḪAL-ŠÍ ku*)]-*in* (70') [(*da-li-ia-at nu-wa-za Š*)]*A 1-EN ḪAL-ŠÍ* LUGAL-*u*[(*š nu-w*)]*a e-ḫu* (71') [(*nu-wa-an-na-aš* ^{d}*IŠTAR* ^{URU}*Š*)]*A-MU-ḪA* ^{d}10 ^{URU}*NE-RI-IK-KA$_4$-ia* (72') [(*ḫa-an-ni-eš-šar ḫa-an-na-a*)]*n-zi*.

[55] H. OTTEN, *Die Apologie Hattusilis III. Das Bild der Überlieferung*, 24–25.

[56] KBo 6.29+ ii 31–36, A. GÖTZE, *Ḫattušiliš. Der Bericht über seine Thronbesteigung nebst den Paralleltexten*, 50–51: (31) *nu-uš-ši kat-ta-an* EGIR-*pa ku-e-da-ni me-e-ḫu-ni* (32) *ar-ḫu-un* BÀD-*eš-šar-ma ŠA IZ-ZI* 40 *gi-pe-eš-šar* (33) *kat-ta ú-it a-pu-un-ma-kán* ^{D}*IŠTAR* ^{URU}*ŠA-MU-ḪA* GAŠAN-*IA* (34) KU$_6$-*un* GIM-*an » ḫu-u-pa-la-za* EGIR-*pa iš-tap-ta* (35) *na-an iš-ḫi-ia-at na-an-mu pa-ra-a pe-eš-ta* (36) *na-an-kán kat-ta ú-wa-te-nu-un*. See also C. RÜSTER, G. WILHELM, *Landschenkungsurkunden hethitischer Könige*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012, 100.

[57] G. SCHMID, "Religiöse Geschichtsdeutung und politische Propaganda im Großen Text des Hattušiliš III," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 37 (1985): 1–21.

[58] F. IMPARATI, "Apology of Ḫattušili III or Designation of His Successor?," 146.

[59] G. SCHMID, "Religiöse Geschichtsdeutung und politische Propaganda im Großen Text des Hattušiliš III," 4.

The sudden collapse of part of the fortification wall in Šamuḫa is by no means the only intervention attributed to Šawoška's in a historical narrative attributed to Ḫattušili "III." According to the fragmentary historical narrative KBo 16.36++, belonging to Ḫattušili's fragmentary account of the campaigns of his grandfather Šuppiluliuma I (CTH 83.2.A), the goddess came to the rescue of a certain Tudḫaliya on his campaign against the Kaška on the river Zuliya. The goddess saved him from the torrential river after a sabotaged bridge collapsed by lifting him by his belt from the water. She also held a shield over him against the stones and arrows that were thrown at him by the Kaška ambush.[60]

Ḫattušili's father, king Muršili II, despite being a prolific writer, did not compose similar compositions proclaiming the divine plan (*parā ḫandandatar*) of his personal deity, the "Mighty" Storm-god. At least none were identified so far. However, the "Comprehensive Annals" are dotted with occurrences of divine intervention that are attributed to him. During a campaign in the ninth year of his reign, Muršili recounts how the "Mighty" Storm-god summoned the deity Ḫašammili in order to keep him and his army invisible from the enemy.[61] On another occasion, the "Mighty" Storm-god intervened and demonstrated his divine plan (*parā ḫandanatar*) to Muršili no less than three times during a single campaign when the king was again fighting the Kaška in the North.[62] On all three occasions the deity safeguarded that the approaching Hittite army remained hidden from the Kaškeans so that they would not flee. On the first occasion, the army was spotted but the enemy was not informed. During the night, while the king was encamping in the town of Pitaggaišša, the "Mighty" Storm-god showed his *parā ḫandaatar* again. He let it raining through the night, fog was appearing as well, hiding the soldier's camp fires from the enemy. The third demonstration of *parā ḫandatar* occurred on the morning it continued to fog, concealing Muršili's march against the Land of Malazziya.[63]

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[60] KBo 16.36 + KUB 31.20 + Bo 5768, edited by S. ALP, *Hethitische Briefe aus Maşat-Höyük*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi (TTKY VI/35), 1991, 32–35.

[61] KBo 4.4 iii 33-35, edited by A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 126–127. See also CHD L-N, 332; M. POPKO, "Muršili II, der mächtige Wettergott und Katapa," 149 and M. WEINFELD, "Divine Intervention in War in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East," 144–145.

[62] KUB 14.20 i 1'-17' + KBo 19.76 i 14'-33', edited by A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 194–197, see also H. OTTEN, "Ausgrabungen und Forschungsreisen. Neue Entdeckungen in Boğazköy," *Archiv für Orientforschung* 22 (1968/9): 113; CHD P, 249 and M. WEINFELD, "Divine Intervention in War in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East," 144–145.

[63] The *parā ḫandandatar* of deities could be shown to the enemy as well. The inhabitants of Kalašma were shown the *parā ḫandandatar* of the oath-gods in KBo 2.5 iv 12-16, A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 192–193, after they transgressed their oath to the Hittite king. The same probably happened to the kings of the land of Nuḫašše according to KBo 4.4 i 45-46a, A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 112–113.

Most significantly, another intervention by the "Mighty" Storm-god is depicted in one of the rare passages in his historical inscriptions in which Muršili directly addresses his audience in the second person.[64] The passage appears in the "Comprehensive" annals, documenting his 19th year campaign against the Kaška:

> Now behold how the "Mighty" Storm-god my lord is running before me. He does not surrender me to evil but has delivered me to good. When I took the road to Taggašta, I would have marched (but) because, as just mentioned, the Taggašteans were lying in ambush before me, a bird stopped me. As I stayed put, the auxiliary troops of the Taggašteans, who had come to aid, dispersed and were not lying anymore in ambush before me. When the auxiliary troops of the Land of Taggašta dispersed I was allowed again (to proceed) by a bird so I marched to the land of Taggašta.[65]

The present article explored two famous occurrences in which divine power was revealed to two Hittite kings during the course of decisive battles. The first occurred during Muršili II's third-year campaign against Uḫḫaziti, king of Arzawa. Uḫḫaziti was the first major opponent the young, inexperienced, perhaps even terrified king had to confront after his ascension to the throne. The lightning bolt that was shot by the "mighty" Storm-God before the campaign, bringing Uḫḫaziti to his knees and securing a sweeping Hittite victory, shaped the religious sentiments of the young king throughout his life. The second occurred during the final battle between Ḫattušili III and the reigning king, his nephew Urḫi-Teššub at the town of Šamuḫa. During that battle, the goddess Šawoška's "divine plan" was revealed to Ḫattušili by the sudden collapse of a massive portion of the fortification wall defending Šamuḫa, leading to Urḫi-

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[64] T. VAN DEN HOUT, "'Two Old Tablets': Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in Hittite Society," 180.

[65] KBo 5.8, with duplicate KUB 19.36, i 12-23, edited by A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 148–149: (12) [(*nu-za*)] *ka-a-aš-ma a-ú* ^{d}10 NIR.GÁL-*mu BE-LÍ-IA ma-aḫ-ḫa-an pé-ra-an* (13) *ḫu-u-i-ia-an-za nu-mu i-da-a-la-u-i pa-ra-a Ú-UL tar-na-a-i* (14) *a-aš-ša-u-i-ma-mu pa-ra-a tar-na-an ḫar-zi nu-kán ma-aḫ-ḫa-an* (15) *A-NA* KASKAL ^{URU}*TÁG-GA-AŠ-TA ti-ia-nu-un ma-an i-ia-an-ni-ia-nu-un* (16) *nu-mu e-ni-iš-ša-an ku-it* LÚ$^{MEŠ\ URU}$*TÁG-GA-AŠ-TA še-e-na-aḫ-ḫa* (17) *pé-ra-an ti-eš-kán-zi nu-mu* MUŠEN *a-ra-a-an ḫar-ta* (18) *ma-aḫ-ḫa-an-ma iš-ta-an-ta-nu-un ŠA* LÚ$^{MEŠ\ URU}$*TÁG-GA-AŠ-TA-ma ku-i-e-eš* (19) ÉRIN$^{ME.EŠ}$ *NA-RA-A-RE-E an-da wa-ar-ri-iš-ša-an-te-eš e-ser* (20) *na-at ar-ḫa pa-ra-a-še-eš-ši-er še-e-na-aḫ-ḫa-ia-mu nam-ma pé-ra-an* (21) *na-at-ta ti-iš-ker ma-aḫ-ḫa-an-ma ŠA* KUR ^{URU}*TÁG-GA-AŠ-TA* ÉRIN$^{ME.EŠ}$ *NA-RA-A-RE-E* (22) *ar-ḫa pa-ra-a-še-eš-ši-er am-mu-uk-ma IŠ-TU* MUŠEN *tar-na-at-ta-at nam-ma* (23) *nu I-NA* KUR ^{URU}*TÁG-GA-AŠ-TA pa-a-un*. On the passage see M. POPKO, "Muršili II, der mächtige Wettergott und Katapa," 149; J. HAZENBOS, "Der Mensch denkt, Gott lenkt: Betrachtungen zum hethitischen Orakelpersonal," in *Das geistige Erfassen der Welt im Alten Orient: Beiträge zu Sprache, Religion, Kultur und Gesellschaft*, C. Wilcke (ed.), Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007, 95–96 and P. M. GOEDEGEBUURE, *The Hittite Demonstratives: Studies in Deixis, Topics and Focus*, 176. A "Storm-god, my Lord" (^{d}10 *EN-IA*) showed his *parā ḫandantātar* in a fragmentary context in Muršili's ninth year, KBo 4.4 ii 76, A. GÖTZE, *Die Annalen des Muršili*, 122–123.

Teššub's defeat. The considerable religious significance of this event is amply documented in Ḫattušili's "Autobiography" as well as in numerous other texts that record Ḫattušili's und Puduhepa's patronage of the cult of Šawoška of Šamuḫa, even if it certainly began earlier.[66] It is illuminating to view these two revelations of divine power from a broader perspective as well. Archaic religiosity is often described as orthopraxical, as primarily based on the correct enacting of cults and rituals, rather than orthodoxical. The two occurrences of divine revelation outlined above set in train considerable cultic activity, even change. Moreover, if the outline suggested above is correct, both occurrences illuminate the deep impact these occurrences of direct divine revelation left on the two kings personally. Direct divine inspiration was an integral part of archaic religions but is especially typical of religiosity after the "Axial Age."[67] The two occurrences outlined above seem to show that direct religious revelation, not only political or geographical considerations, promoted the intimate relationship between Hittite kings of the late "Empire" period and their "personal deities."

Abstract

This chapter explores several occurrences in which divine power was revealed to Hittite kings during battle. One famous occurrence took place during king Muršili's third-year campaign against Uḫḫaziti, king of Arzawa. A lightning bolt was shot by the "Mighty" Storm-God before the battle, revealing his "divine plan", bringing Uḫḫaziti to his knees and securing a Hittite victory. A similar occurrence took place during the final confrontation between king Ḫattušili III and Urḫi-Teššub at the town of Šamuḫa. There, the goddess Šawoška's "divine plan" was revealed to Ḫattušili by the sudden collapse of a massive portion of the fortification wall defending Šamuḫa, leading to the capture of Urḫi-Teššub. The chapter addresses several questions that arise from these, and similar, occurrences and their depiction in Hittite historiography. It also outlines their considerable religious significance.

[66] A cult inventory text recently excavated at the site of Kayalipinar, identified as ancient Šamuḫa, edited by E. RIEKEN, "Ein Kultinventar für Šamuḫa aus Šamuḫa und andere Texte aus Kayalıpmar," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 146 (2014): 43–54, is concerned with the regulation of cultic supplies to the goddess. It was probably authored by Ḫattušili himself during the reign of his brother. Several votive and dream texts by Queen Puduḫepa relate to Šamuḫa or the goddess (see most recently M. FORLANINI, "Some Hurrian Cult Centers North of the Taurus and the Travels of the Queen," in *Sacred Landscapes of Hittites and Luwians. Proceedings of the International Conference in Honour of Franca Pecchioli Daddi, Florence, February 6th-8th 2014*, A. D'Agostino *et al*. (eds), Firenze: Firenze University Press (Studia Asiana 9), 2015, 32.

[67] See G. G. STROUMSA, "Cristiano Grottanelli, An Albatross,"*Lares* 76 (2010): 263–268.

ORACLES AS ARTEFACTS: THE MATERIAL ASPECT OF PROPHECY

Martti Nissinen*

1. Texts as Written Artefacts

The study of prophecy and divination in ancient times is possible only to a limited extent. Dependent as we are on fragmentary and haphazard source materials, we have a very restricted access to the ancient phenomenon of divination. The evidence we have at our disposal often answers only insufficiently and indirectly the questions we are asking of it. That the reconstruction of ancient Near Eastern and Greek divination is achievable at all is due to texts that have been preserved from certain historical periods and places, and we can only hope that the information given by these sources is enough to construct a more or less accurate image of the divinatory phenomenon.

Texts, as one would presume, have been written in order to be seen and read. There are many ways of seeing and reading, however, depending on the purpose of production, genre, distribution, location, and accessibility of a given text. Texts have been produced presuming that there is an audience who understands the message and makes use of the artefact on which the text has been written. The intended audience may comprise an individual person, a more or less restricted community or, perhaps, the gods; but certainly not the modern scholarly community. Texts were not written with us in mind, we read them as outsiders. There is a considerable temporal and cultural gap between us and the people who produced and used our source texts, and the only bridge crossing this gap are the sources themselves, that is, the material objects containing texts that even we are able to read and study.

As readers of ancient texts, we try to be as sensitive as possible to what the text says, focusing our study to its message, its language, literary form, and contents, and rightly so. However, we might not always be sensitive enough to what the source *is*, that is, the vehicle and medium of the message, even though it is precisely the artefact that connects us with the ancient people rather than their thoughts and intentions that the text is supposed to convey. "The space between text and object, which is precisely the space in which meaning is constructed, has too often been forgotten," writes Roger Chartier, reminding us

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that authors do not write books but texts that become written objects, whether hand-written, printed, or electronical.[1] The attention paid to the contents is somewhat disproportionate with regard to the fact that the medium itself is the very reason why we know something about ancient divination anyway. Indeed, it seems as if we believed that the inscription made the object and not the other way around.[2]

At this turn, we are well-advised to remember Marshall McLuhan's famous phrase "the medium is the message."[3] McLuhan did not have ancient sources in mind and he did not study media archaeology, but even in the case of ancient texts, the content is not independent from the carrier which, in fact, embeds itself in the content it conveys.[4] How the message is perceived is greatly influenced by the medium, and this is true for an ancient inscription as well as for the modern media. Our access to the past is determined by, not only the contents of the text, but also by the textual genre which, again, corresponds to the form, function, social life, and agency of the artefact.

This essay discusses the material aspect of prophecy, not from the point of view of materials used in prophetic performances, but from that of the materiality of the sources ancient prophecy can be reconstructed from. The written object is the primary context of every text, the meaning and historical setting of which we want to reconstruct.[5] Therefore, the study of the artefact itself should, in fact, be an essential part of textual and historical analysis.[6] The study of the material object may disclose things that the literary form of the

[1] R. CHARTIER, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, L. G. Cochrane, (tr.), Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, 10.

[2] Cf. C. TSOUPAROPOULOU, "Deconstructing Textuality, Reconstructing Materiality," in *Materiality of Writing in Early Mesopotamia*, T. E. Balke, C. Tsouparopoulou (eds), Berlin: de Gruyter (Materiale Textkulturen 13), 2016, 257–275, esp. 258.

[3] M. MCLUHAN, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, New York: Signet Book, 1964; repr. London: Routledge, 2001. For discussion on McLuhan, see, e.g., J. D. PETERS, *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015, 15–18 and *passim*; W. T. GORDON, *McLuhan: A Guide for the Perplexed*, New York: Continuum (Guides for the Perplexed), 2010.

[4] See H. LUNDHAUG, L. I. LIED, "Studying Snapshots: On Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology," in *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions: Jewish and Christian Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology*, H. Lundhaug, L. I. Lied (eds), Berlin: de Gruyter (TUGAL 175), 2017, 1–19, esp. 6–8.

[5] According to R. CHARTIER, *The Order of Books*, 9, "we need to remember that there is no text apart from the physical support that offers it for reading (or hearing), hence there is no comprehension of any written piece that does not at least in part depend upon the forms in which it reaches the reader."

[6] See A. MANDELL, "Reading and Writing Remembrance in Canaan: Early Alphabetic Inscriptions as Multimodal Objects," *HeBAI* 7 (2018): 253–284; cf. R. L. ZETTLER, "Written Documents as Excavated Artifacts and the Holistic Interpretation of the Mesopotamian Archaeological Record," in *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the 21st Century*, J. S. Cooper, G. M. Schwartz (eds), Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996, 81–101.

text is unable to reveal, such as the social preconditions of the transmission of the text, the social status and function of a prophetic message, reasons why it was once written down, and the use and afterlife of a prophetic oracle as the object of interpretation, sometimes even as a visible monument.

In fact, every single document of ancient prophecy is a witness of its secondary use and interpretation. The document may be based on a written record of an oral performance, but this does not mean that it presents the verbal content of a prophetic oracle in a fixed and durable form—on the contrary: "In orality, the first draft is usually the final draft, but writing is both permanence and change."[7] The very writtenness of a text causes it to be a manageable object. Scribal activity is not simply about copying but also about reading and interpreting the source, in fact, re-creation and physical reshaping of its meaning and function.[8]

Every time a prophecy has ended up in writing there has been a social need for it—not only for the message but also for the written object. The same is true for every copy of the text. We may be misled by the mass production of identical copies of easily accessible printed books to realize that every handwritten manuscript is an individual artefact, a new scribal creation and performance with a new context and reason to exist.[9] Therefore, as much as we would like to know the *intentio auctoris* and *ipsissima verba*, we should never forget the secondary and recontextualized nature of the medium, the only source of knowledge available to us.

The written documentation of the prophetic phenomenon in the ancient Eastern Mediterranean can be divided into three main types of artefacts:

1. Cuneiform texts, both tablets and prisms.
2. Inscriptions, that is, monumental inscriptions carved in stone, texts painted on a wall, and words inscribed on small artefacts.
3. Scrolls, whether parchment or papyrus.

This threefold division of media corresponds to the geographical and cultural origin of the artefacts documenting prophecy. Cuneiform texts originate

[7] J. D. PETERS, *The Marvelous Clouds*, 306.
[8] Cf. P. S. ALEXANDER, A. SAMELY, "Introduction: Artefact and Text," *BJRL* 93/3 (1993): 5–16, esp. 6–8.
[9] See, e.g., D. M. CARR, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, 44 on Mesopotamian cuneiform tablets. Already McLuhan wrote: "Print is the extreme phase of alphabet culture that detribalizes or decollectivizes man in the first instance. Print raises the visual features of alphabet to highest intensity of definition. Thus print carries the individuating power of the phonetic alphabet much further than manuscript culture could ever do. Print is the technology of individualism." M. MCLUHAN, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*, London: Routledge, 1962, 158.

from Mesopotamia, inscriptions come from the Greek and West Semitic cultural spheres, and scrolls from Palestine. This already suggests that, if there is any truth to the slogan "the medium is the message," quite different messages are to be expected from these three or four spheres of scribal activity.

I will give a brief presentation of four cases, one cuneiform, two inscriptions, and one scroll-related: an oracle collection from Nineveh; the Deir Alla inscription; the compilation of inscriptions from the Phrygian Hierapolis; and the scrolls containing "biblical" texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls. My main attention is primarily on the artefacts, their context and probable function.

2. The Assyrian Collection of Prophecies

My first example is a cuneiform tablet, the original context of which was the royal archive in Nineveh, the capital city of the Assyrian empire. The archive was burned when Babylonian and Median troops invaded Nineveh in 612 BCE, to be discovered only by Austen Henry Layard in 1850. Among the documents deriving from the archive is a small group of prophetic oracles. The large, beautifully written tablet SAA 9 1 consists of six columns and containing ten individual prophetic oracles, each having a colophon indicating the name and domicile of the prophet and separated from each other by rulings.[10] The text, datable to the year 673 BCE,[11] is a compilation of earlier oracles and is probably based on individual written oracle reports dating to the years 681–680 BCE. None of these reports has been preserved, but half-a-dozen of extant reports of this type (SAA 9 5–11) give an idea how they may have looked like. The individual reports are comparable to other divinatory reports, especially astrological ones, the purpose of which was to provide the king with divine knowledge he needed for his political decisions. The reports were not meant for long-term preservation, and the prophetic reports (unlike the astrological ones) do not seem to have a fixed form of expression.

Tablets containing collections of prophetic oracles are only known from Assyria. The three extant collections (SAA 9 1–3)[12] are especially important in testifying to the scribal reuse of the reports originally based on an oral performance. This requires selection of archival material that is then compiled and edited to fulfill a new purpose. Such reuse of divinatory material is not known

[10] Edition: S. Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, Helsinki: Helsinki University Press (SAA 9), 1997, 4–11. For a full description of the tablet, see *ibid*., p. lv–lvii.
[11] For the date, see *ibid*., lxix.
[12] The fourth collection survives only as the small fragment SAA 9 4 (S. Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, lix–lx, 30).

in the case of astrological or extispicy reports,[13] which are always bound to one specific historical moment. Stars and sheep livers can be interpreted only once, and the reports are not reusable. The divine word (*amatu*), however, seems to have a more enduring value, especially when it appears in a written form.

While the constellations of stars change all the time and every sheep liver is different and immediately expendable after the reading, the written word, that is, the *materialized* form of the divine message, can be reinterpreted and used for new purposes. In the case of the Assyrian written oracles, the purpose is as much archival as it is ideological. The very existence of the collection tablets testifies to the need of recontextualization of the divine word in a new historical situation, which resulted in a new scribal performance that is as much reproduction of a preexisting text as a new individual written object. The objective of the Assyrian collections is an emphatically political and ideological one, proclaiming the royal theology and the legitimacy of the king –this time Assurbanipal who is not mentioned in the oracles but whose less-than-obvious investiture as the crown prince is the most probable reason for compiling the documents.[14] As archival documents, the written oracles have served even as source material for other kinds of writings: the so-called Nineveh A inscription of Esarhaddon (RINAP 4 1)[15] demonstrably uses the oracular material when describing his tumultuous rise to power.[16]

The tablets preserved within the State Archives of Assyria in Nineveh were accessible only to a small circle of scholars. However large audiences the oral performances may once have had, the tablets written on the basis of the prophetic proclamation were not available to the public but belonged to the restricted realm of the king's scholars. We do not know the names of the scribes who produced the prophetic collections. However, there is reason to believe that texts containing divine knowledge were part of the secret lore of the schol-

[13] The Neo-Assyrian astrological reports are published in H. HUNGER, *Astrological Reports to Assyrian Kings*, Helsinki: Helsinki University Press (SAA 8), 1992, and the Neo-Assyrian oracle queries and extispicy reports in I. STARR, *Queries to the Sungod: Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria*, Helsinki: Helsinki University Press (SAA 4), 1990. See also U. S. KOCH, *Mesopotamian Divination Texts: Conversing with the Gods, Sources from the First Millennium BCE*, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag (GMTR 7), 2015, 47–51.

[14] See S. PARPOLA, *Assyrian Prophecies*, lxix–lxx and cf. my arguments in M. NISSINEN, *References to Prophecy in Neo-Assyrian Sources*, Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project (SAAS 7), 1998, 14–34.

[15] Edition: E. LEICHTY, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC)*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns (RINAP 4), 2011, 11–26.

[16] See S. PARPOLA, *Assyrian Prophecies*, lxxii–lxxiii and M. NISSINEN, "Religious Texts as Historical Sources: Assyrian Prophecies as Sources of Esarhaddon's Nineveh A Inscription," in R. Mattila *et al*. (eds), *Writing Neo-Assyrian History: Sources, Problems and Approaches*, Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project (SAAS, forthcoming).

ars (*ummânū*), the elite among professional scribes, who protected their texts from non-authorized use.[17]

3. The Deir Alla Inscription

An entirely different kind of material object with prophetic words written on it is the Deir Alla inscription found in the central Jordan valley.[18] The inscription is written in a language akin to Aramaic or Canaanite,[19] and it was originally displayed in a benched room (EE 335) measuring 3 x 4,3 m and belonging to an Iron II stratum (Phase IX, c. 850–800 BCE). The building was destroyed by earthquake, and the preserved fragments of the texts were lying on the floor, a major portion of the writing being lost. The reconstructed inscription is originally about one meter high and is written in black and red ink on white plaster. It has a red framing on top and on the left margin, indicating an uninscribed column on the left side of the inscribed one. In addition to the text, there were images painted on the plaster, of which only a winged sphinx-like figure above the top framing of the blank column is identifiable.[20]

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[17] See A. Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods: Secret Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia and Biblical Israel*, Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project (SAAS 19), 2008, 135–215. The fact that the tablets containing prophetic oracles do not carry the so-called secrecy colophon explicitly restricting the exposure of the text, does not mean that they did not belong to the realm of scribal secrecy, since these security measures are inconsistent; see *ibid*., 204, 214–215.

[18] Edition: J. Hoftijzer, G. van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, Leiden: Brill (DMOA 19), 1976. See also E. Blum, "Die Kombination I der Wandinschrift vom Tell Deir ʿAlla: Vorschläge zur Rekonstruktion mit historisch-kritischen Anmerkungen," in *Berührungspunkte: Studien zu Sozial- und Religionsgeschichte Israel und seiner Umwelt, Festschrift für Rainer Albertz zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, I. Kottsieper *et al*. (eds), Münster: Ugarit-Verlag (AOAT 350), 2008, 573–601; *id*., "'Verstehst du dich nicht auf die Schreibkunst…?' Ein weisheitlicher Dialog über Vergänglichkeit und Verantwortung: Kombination II der Wandinschrift vom Tell Deir ʿAlla," in *Was ist der Mensch, dass du seiner gedenkst? (Psalm 8,5): Aspekte einer theologischen Anthropologie, Festschrift für Bernd Janowski*, M. Bauks *et al*. (eds), Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008, 33–51; *id*., "Die altaramäischen Wandinschriften vom Tell Deir ʿAlla und ihr institutioneller Kontext," in *Metatexte: Erzählungen von Schrifttragenden Artefakten in der alttestamentlichen und mittelalterlichen Literatur*, F.-E. Flocken, M. R. Ott (eds), Berlin: de Gruyter (Materiale Textkulturen 15), 2016, 21–52.

[19] Many scholars interpret the language as a form of Aramaic; thus, e.g., E. Blum, "Die altaramäischen Wandinschriften vom Tell Deir ʿAlla," 24. It has recently also been identified as Canaanite by N. Pat-El, A. Wilson-Wright, "Deir ʿAllā as a Canaanite Dialect: A Vindication of Hackett," in *Epigraphy, Philology, and the Hebrew Bible: Methodological Perspectives on Philological and Comparative Study of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of Jo Ann Hackett*, J. M. Hutton, A. D. Rubin (eds), Atlanta: SBL Press (ANEM 12), 2015, 13–23.

[20] See G. van der Kooij, M. M. Ibrahim, *Picking up the Threads…: A Continuing Review of the Excavations at Deir Alla, Jordan*, Leiden: University of Leiden, Archaeological Centre, 1989, 65, fig. 82.

From the preserved part of the text scholars have reconstructed two distinct combinations. The text, at least the first part of it, is introduced as a "book" (*spr*) of Balaam son of Beor (this title of the work is written in red ink), and the content is for the one part a description of a cataclysmic vision and for the other, some sort of a wisdom text. Since the text consists of two or more parts, it is probably based on older manuscripts. The designation *spr* is most likely to refer to a scroll, perhaps indicating one of the source texts, and what is left of the text as a whole suggests an edited compilation.[21] The written object is evidently the work of a skilled professional scribe. It is beautifully written and carefully designed to form a part of its spatial environment –indeed, a work of art.

Why has such a work been put together, and why has it been written on the wall of a certain room? Some scholars have theorized that the room, and, consequently, the inscription, served the purpose of scribal education.[22] Erhard Blum in particular has argued powerfully for this interpretation.[23] According to him, the design of the inscription suggests that it was used as a writing board.[24] The complexity of the contents of the text and its layout reminding of the design of the Egyptian literary papyri suggests the educational function of the text and the room, as does the institutional self-referentiality of the text, referring to certain institutional skills.[25] Moreover, a comparable classroom from the Roman period village of Trimithis in Egypt with a bench and a Greek school text painted on the wall plaster with red ink provides itself as an analogy from later times.[26] All this leads Blum to surmise that the room once accommodated an Aramean scribe school established by the central government of Damascus for the purpose of acculturating the local Israelite-Gileadite population.[27]

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[21] Cf., e.g., E. BLUM, "Die altaramäischen Wandinschriften vom Tell Deir ʿAlla," 28.

[22] E.g., A. LEMAIRE, "Les inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla et leur signification historique et culturelle," in *The Balaam Text from Deir 'Alla Re-evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium Held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989*, Leiden: Brill, 1991, 33–57; R. WENNING, E. ZENGER, "Heiligtum ohne Stadt—Stadt ohne Heiligtum? Anmerkungen zum archäologischen Befund des Tell Dēr ʻAllā," *ZAH* 4 (1991): 171–193.

[23] E. BLUM, "Die altaramäischen Wandinschriften vom Tell Deir ʿAlla," 36–40.

[24] *Ibid*., 36: "[D]ie Konstellation deutet darauf hin, dass die verputzte Wand als eine Art Tafel diente. Sollten angeschriebene Texte durch andere ersetzt warden, war im übrigen mit Tünche leicht *tabula rasa* hergestellt."

[25] This concerns especially Text B (the second combination), interpreted by Blum as a wisdom text.

[26] See R. CRIBIORE *et al*., "A Teacher's Dipinto from Trimithis (Dakhleh Oasis)," *JRA* 21 (2008): 170–191; R. CRIBIORE, P. DAVOLI, "New Literary Texts from Amheida, Ancient Trimithis (Dakhla Oasis, Egypt)," *ZPE* 187 (2010): 1–14.

[27] E. BLUM, "Die altaramäischen Wandinschriften vom Tell Deir ʿAlla," 40–41.

Other scholars believe the room to have served as a sanctuary, presenting some features that point rather strongly to this direction.[28] Benched rooms in the Levant are often interpreted as having had a ritual function,[29] and the bench may have been used as a location where votive offerings, censers and other ritual objects have been placed. No ritual paraphernalia were found in the room EE 335 itself, but the opposite room complex has a rich assemblage of items probably used for ritual purposes, perhaps as votive offerings: libation vessels; several female and male figurines; a stone inscribed as "the stone of Shar'a" (*'bn šr'*) and other short Aramaic inscriptions on small objects; a loom weight too big to serve in its everyday function, and so on.[30] Moreover, fragments of a cloth made of hemp, an exotic fibre, were found together with loom weights in the room adjacent to the benched room. Textile production is often associated with sanctuaries, and Phase IX of Tell Deir Alla has revealed a large number of artefacts related to textile industry.[31] Brian Schmidt compares Deir Alla to Kuntillet Ajrud as a site where textile production was connected to rituals dedicated to localized deities, characterizing Deir Alla as "an Aramean-controlled multiethnic textile-production site dedicated to El and the goddess Shagar."[32]

The interpretations of Blum and Schmidt agree about the professional character of the inscription and the political situation of Deir Alla under the control of Aram-Damascus; otherwise they provide very different explanations to the socio-religious context and function of the written object. Regardless of which of the two theories we accept, the bench and the inscription make clear that the room was set apart for a purpose different from all other rooms in the compound. The room was probably accessible to an audience, but since it was rather small, it cannot have accommodated many people at once. The inscription, hence, can be characterized as public or semi-public, depending on who was expected to visit the room. It was positioned prominently and was certainly designed to attract attention by its highly artistic appearance.

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[28] See, e.g., H. J. FRANKEN, "Deir ʿAlla and Its Religion," in *Sacred and Sweet: Studies on the Material Culture of Tell Deir 'Alla and Tell Abu Sarbut*, M. Steiner, E. J. van der Steen (eds), Leuven: Peeters (Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplement Series 24), 2008, 25–52; J. H. BOERTIEN, *Unravelling the Fabric: Textile Production in Iron Age Transjordan*, Diss., Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2013, 295–231; B. B. SCHMIDT, "Memorializing Conflict: Toward an Iron Age 'Shadow' History of Israel's Earliest Literature," in *Contextualizing Israel's Sacred Writings: Ancient Literacy, Orality, and Literary Production*, B. B. Schmidt (ed.), Atlanta: SBL Press (SBL.AIL 22), 2015, 103–132, esp. 113–115.

[29] For examples, see J. H. BOERTIEN, *Unravelling the Fabric*, 300 with n. 133.

[30] See H. J. FRANKEN, "Deir ʿAlla and Its Religion," 44–48.

[31] For textiles at Deir Alla, see J. H. BOERTIEN, *Unravelling the Fabric*, 298.

[32] B. B. SCHMIDT, "Memorializing Conflict," 116.

It is not my purpose in this essay to play off one well-argued theory against the other, but rather to ask what difference the function of the spatial context makes for the interpretation of the Deir Alla inscription as an artefact. If the room served as a scribal "master class," the text may have served as a perfect model of the exercise of different aspects of textual production: compiling, editing, writing, and designing an aesthetic written artefact. But the text also performed itself[33] as an iconic representation of the scribal institution and the socio-religious agency of the audience itself. The purpose of the written object, hence, was to support the identity of the scribes as a distinct social class.

If the room served as a sanctuary, the inscription was visible to the visitors and may have symbolized the presence of the divine word in a manner that was attractive and meaningful even for an illiterate visitor. In this interpretation, the communicative value of the text itself does not need to be overestimated.[34] The text performs itself in a different way, marking the presence of the divine (word) and the liminal space or a "boundary zone" between the human and divine realms.[35] The writing on the wall is not deprived of its meaning: some visitors could read it and transmit its contents to those who could not. However, the artefact as such in its entire appearance represents and *presences* the divine realm and agency in a way comparable to a divine image. Hence, the meaning of the text may not have been only, or even primarily, derived from its linguistic content.[36] The very materiality of the sacred, in this case in the form of a written object with divinatory content, was used as a means of interaction and communication with the gods.[37]

[33] E. BLUM, "Die altaramäischen Wandinschriften vom Tell Deir ʿAlla," 27: "Mit dieser gewiss absichtsvollen ästhetischen Präsentation thematisiert der schriftliche Text gleichsam sich selbst in seiner visuell-medialen Gestalt."

[34] Cf. C. TSOUPAROPOULOU, "Deconstructing Textuality," 259.

[35] Thus J. H. BOERTIEN, *Unravelling the Fabric*, 299; B. B. SCHMIDT, "Memorializing Conflict," 114.

[36] Cf. A. MANDELL, "Reading and Writing Remembrance in Canaan," 254, on linear alphabetic texts in funerary contexts: "While these objects derived linguistic meaning from the very act of writing, it is important not to forget that their emplacement into specific social and physical spaces communicated their social meaning and value to local communities."

[37] For divine images presencing the divine, see B. PONGRATZ-LEISTEN, K. SONIK, "Between Cognition and Culture: Theorizing the Materiality of Divine Agency in Cross-Cultural Perspective," in *The Materiality of Divine Agency*, B. Pongratz-Leisten, K. Sonik (eds), Berlin: de Gruyter (SANER 8), 2015, 3–69.

4. The Clarian Oracles at Hierapolis

My third example comes from the Greek world. Oracles pronounced in temples of Apollo at Didyma and Claros can be found in inscriptions from different places of the Eastern Mediterranean, commemorating the visits to the oracle.[38] They are composed by professional scribes and secondarily inscribed on stone slabs. The inscriptions usually contain only one oracle or a reference to an oracle. In one case, however, an ensemble of five texts written in the mid-second century CE have been inscribed on two stone slabs that were found 1962/63 in the excavations of the temple of Apollo at Hierapolis in Phrygia (modern Pamukkale).[39] The slabs were found in secondary use as a part of the construction of the third-century CE temple,[40] hence their exact original location is unknown. Most probably, however, they were displayed publicly in the temple of Apollo and were probably meant to be seen by anyone visiting the temple.[41] The first slab, measuring 160 x 50 x 43 cm, begins with an introductory text indicating that a person called […]llianos had had the oracles written at the behest of Apollo Archegetes[42] at the cost of his own ([ὑπὲ]ρ ἑαυτοῦ [ἀγέγρ]αψε). The first oracle of Apollo concerning a plague is written on the first slab after the introduction. The second slab (95 x 98 x 68 cm), written on both sides, includes three further oracles which are too fragmentary to make it possible determine their relationship with the first one.

Hierapolis itself was a well-known oracle site, boasting the oracles of Pluto and Apollo Kareios, some of whose oracles have been preserved.[43] The Apol-

[38] The oracles originating from Claros have been collected in R. Merkelbach, J. Stauber, "Die Orakel des Apollon von Klaros," *Epigraphica Anatolica* 27 (1996): 1–53. For the sources containing oracular responses from Didyma, see J. Fontenrose, *Didyma: Apollo's Oracle, Cult and Companions*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

[39] Edition: G. Pugliese Carratelli, "Χρησμοί di Apollo Kareios e Apollo Klaros a Hierapolis in Frigia," *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene* 41–42 (1963/64): 351–370. See also T. Ritti, *An Epigraphic Guide to Hierapolis (Pamukkale)*, P. Arthur, (tr.), Istanbul: Ege Yayınları, 2006, 94–99; C. Oesterheld, *Göttliche Botschaften zu zweifelnden Menschen: Pragmatik und Orientierungsleistung der Apollon-Orakel von Klaros und Didyma in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (Hypomnemata 174), 2008, 74–116; *id*., "La parole salvatrice transformée en remède perpétuel: L'oracle d'Apollon de Claros rendu à la ville de Hiérapolis en Phrygie," in *Le sanctuaire de Claros et son oracle: Actes du colloque international de Lyon, 13–14 janvier 2012*, J.-C. Moretti (ed.), Lyon: Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée (Travaux de la Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée 65), 2014, 211–226.

[40] G. Pugliese Carratelli, "Χρησμοί di Apollo Kareios e Apollo Klaros:" 351.

[41] According to T. Ritti, *An Epigrahic Guide to Hierapolis*, 94, the command of Apollo Archegetes to have the oracles written "assures us that the block, from its very beginning, was located in the sanctuary."

[42] The designation ἀρχηγέτης refers to the god as the founder of the city of Hierapolis.

[43] For Apollo Kareios, see C. Oesterheld, *Göttliche Botschaften zu zweifelnden Menschen*, 79–87; for the oracles, see M. L. West, "Oracles of Apollo Kareios: A Revised Text," *ZPE* 1 (1967): 183–87.

lonian oracles compiled on the stone slabs, however, are not those of Apollo Kareios but of Apollo of Claros, based on the visits of the delegations from Hierapolis.[44] The original oracular responses were probably written in the sanctuary of Apollo at Claros by a professional scribe (γραμματεύς) and given to the delegations to be brought to Hierapolis.[45] They are composed in a highly literary language characteristic to Clarian oracles.[46] The first, best preserved oracle is clearly an answer of Apollo to the questions posed by Hierapolitan citizens while visiting the oracle of Claros to ask by which ritual means they could contend with the plague (λοιμός) that was tormenting the city.[47] In addition to the prescription of a series of offerings to different gods the oracle commands the erection of a statue of Apollo of Claros in Hierapolis and the expedition of a (renewed) delegation to Colophon, that is, to the Clarian oracle. The Clarian origin of the other oracles is less explicit but generally assumed on the basis of their contents and language.[48]

The stone slabs placed in the temple of Apollo in Hierapolis fulfilled many functions. First, they commemorated the citizens' visits to the Clarian oracle and Apollo's advice they brought with them back to Hierapolis. As such, they served as a material performance of the shared memory of the (elite) community of Hierapolis, reinforcing their common tradition and identity.[49] Second, they demonstrated the significance of the visits to Claros, one of the most prestigious oracle sites, for the integration of the Hierapolitans into the imperial socio-religious and political context.[50] Third, the stone slabs with oracles written on them perform themselves as a materialization of the rituals against the

[44] For the visits of delegations from different cities to Claros, see J.-L. FERRARY, "La distribution topographique des mémoriaux de délégations dans le sanctuaire de Claros," in Moretti (ed.), *Le sanctuaire de Claros et son oracle*, 189–200.

[45] For writing the oracles for the visitors, see A. LAMPINEN, "Θεῷ μεμελημένε Φοίβῳ: Oracular Functionaries at Claros and Didyma in the Imperial Period," in *Studies in Ancient Oracle and Divination*, M. Kajava (ed.), Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae (Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae 40), 2013, 49–88, esp. 59.

[46] For the characteristic language of Clarian oracles, see R. MERKELBACH, J. STAUBER, "Die Orakel des Apollon von Klaros:" 3–4.

[47] Most probably, this is the so-called "Antonine plague" that took place between 165 and 170 CE when the Roman troops returned from their campaign against the Parthians; see C. OESTERHELD, "La parole salvatrice transformée en remède perpétuel," 211–13; T. RITTI, *An Epigraphic Guide to Hierapolis*, 97.

[48] See A. BUSINE, "Le problème de l'attribution de textes oraculaires au sanctuaire de Claros," in Moretti (ed.), *Le sanctuaire de Claros et son oracle*, 201–210, esp. 207; C. OESTERHELD, *Göttliche Botschaften zu zweifelnden Menschen*, 116–28.

[49] For remembrance, performance, and guidance of identity, see A. CHANIOTIS, "Negotiating Religion in the Cities of the Eastern Roman Empire," *Kernos* 16 (2003): 177–190.

[50] See A. BUSINE, "Oracles and Civic Identity in Roman Asia Minor," in *Cults, Creeds, and Identities in the Greek City after Classical Age*, R. Alston *et al*. (eds), Leuven: Peeters (Groningen-Royal Holloway Studies on the Greek City after the Classical Age 3), 2013, 175–196.

pestilence, a visible, tangible, and permanent witness of the divine power of healing.[51] Last but not least, they also memorialize the person who had paid for their production; perhaps the publicizing of the donor's name was the primary reason for the preparation of the inscription. The two stone slabs are thus important sources in providing us with the only extant specimen of a privately sponsored oracle collection from the Greek world.

5. Prophecy in Dead Sea Scrolls

My fourth example is not a single artefact but a large group of texts, that is, the Dead Sea Scrolls, many of which contain texts conventionally called "biblical." However, it is good to remember that "Bible" is an anachronistic concept with regard to the Dead Sea Scrolls, since there is no evidence of a fixed biblical canon at the time when the scrolls were written.[52] The non-fixed character of the text in the Dead Sea Scrolls is very important with regard to the materiality of the text, since it presents itself clearly in the way prophetic texts known to us from the Hebrew Bible are represented in the Scrolls—not only in the textual content but also in the physical appearance. A scroll can contain one prophetic book, either Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, or the Twelve Prophets, hence these books existed as individual artefacts, each of which was a new scribal performance.[53] Even if the scrolls are copies of texts that already enjoyed an authoritative status, they are truly individual artefacts because they are all different.[54] Authoritativeness does not entail immutability as, for instance, the varying order of the "Minor Prophets" in the Twelve Prophets scrolls[55] and the different versions of the book of Jeremiah unambiguously demonstrate.[56]

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[51] See C. Oesterheld, "La parole salvatrice transformée en remède perpétuel," 225–226.

[52] See, e.g., M. S. Pajunen, "Bible," in *T&T Clark Companion to the Dead Sea Scrolls*, G. J. Brooke, C. Hempel (eds), London: T&T Clark, 2018, 367–375; M. M. Zahn, "Talking about Rewritten Texts: Some Reflections on Terminology," in *Changes in Scripture: Rewriting and Interpreting Authoritative Traditions in the Second Temple Period*, H. von Weissenberg *et al*. (eds), Berlin: de Gruyter (BZAW 419), 2011, 93–119, esp. 95–102; S. W. Crawford, "'Biblical' Text—Yes or No?," in *What is Bible*, K. Finsterbusch, A.Lange (eds), Leuven: Peeters (CBET 67), 2012, 113–119.

[53] For the manuscripts of prophetic books, see R. E. Fuller, "The Biblical Prophetic Manuscripts form the Judaean Desert," in *Prophecy after the Prophets? The Contribution of the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Understanding of Biblical and Extra-Biblical Prophecy*, K. De Troyer, A. Lange (eds), Leuven: Peeters (BETL 52), 2009, 3–23.

[54] This, of course, is by no means unique to the Dead Sea Scrolls but to manuscript culture before the era of printed books in general; see H. Lundhaug, L. I. Lied, "Studying Snapshots," 3.

[55] See, e.g., M. S. Pajunen, H. von Weissenberg, "The Book of Malachi, Manuscript 4Q76 (4QXII[a]), and the Formation of the 'Book of the Twelve," *JBL* 134 (2015): 731–51; *id*., "The Twelve Minor Prophets at Qumran and the Canonical Process: Amos as a 'Case Study,'" in *The*

From the point of view of materiality, it is important to pay attention to the different contexts of prophetic texts and the flexibility of their transmission in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Even though prophetic books were copied as such, and the prophets were acknowledged as their authors,[57] texts belonging to the prophetic books could be reproduced in different ways: as quotations in writings belonging to other genres, in florilegia, and especially in the pesharim, that is, the combination of textual quotation and commentary.[58] Moreover, a flourishing new type of texts comprising "parabiblical" prophetic rewritings such as *The Apocryphon of Jeremiah* and *Pseudo-Ezekiel* is well represented among the Dead Sea Scrolls.[59]

Such a cornucopia of new scribal involvement in prophetic tradition is unprecedented in the ancient world, and its emergence is essentially associated with the writing material and scribal techniques. The scroll provides the best material preconditions of a scribal performance that includes editing, rewriting, *Fortschreibung*, and intensive intertextual work. These techniques are known even in cuneiform material that includes large compilations of omens and their commentaries as well as several editions of literary works such as Gilgameš.[60] All this is, however, much easier to perform with a scroll in hand, and it seems like the scroll format has endorsed forms of

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Hebrew Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls, N. Dávid *et al*. (eds), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (FRLANT 234), 2012, 357–375.

[56] For the versions of the book of Jeremiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see A. LANGE, "Texts of Jeremiah in the Qumran Library," in *The Book of Jeremiah: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, J. R. Lundbom *et al*. (eds), Leiden: Brill (VTSup 178), 2018, 280–302.

[57] E.g., *Damascus Document* XIX, 7: "…when there comes the word which is written by the hand of the prophet Zechariah;" cf. M. NISSINEN, "Transmitting Divine Mysteries: The Prophetic Role of Wisdom Teachers in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Scripture in Transition: Essays on the Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and the Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo*, A. Voitila, J. Jokiranta (eds), Leiden: Brill (JSJSup 126), 2008, 513–533, esp. 521–524.

[58] See, e.g., G. J. BROOKE, "Prophecy and Prophets in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Looking Backwards and Forwards," in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*, M. H. Floyd, R. D. Haak (eds), London: T&T Clark (LHBOTS 427), 2006, 151–165; P. PORZIG, "'Prophecy' and 'Rewriting' in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Take Another Scroll and Write: Studies in the Interpretive Afterlife of Prophets and Prophecy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, P. Lindqvist, S. Grebenstein (eds), Turku: Åbo Akademi University and Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns (Studies in the Reception History of the Bible 6), 2016, 31–47.

[59] See K. DAVIS, *The Cave 4* Apocryphon of Jeremiah *and the Qumran Jeremianic Traditions: Prophetic Persona and the Construction of Community Identity*, Leiden: Brill (STJD 111), 2014; M. POPOVIĆ, "Prophet, Books and Texts: Ezekiel, *Pseudo-Ezekiel* and the Authoritativeness of Ezekiel Traditions in Early Judaism," in *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism*, M. Popović (ed.), Leiden: Brill (JSJSup 141), 2010, 227–251; S. W. CRAWFORD, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature), 2008.

[60] For the different versions of Gilgameš, see A. GEORGE, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

textual production that enable more extensive editorial activity.[61]

In the case of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the scroll appears as the foremost vehicle of interpretation of textual tradition that in the case of prophecy may be more intensive and creative than in any other material known to us. Prophetic books are written on scrolls, not on clay tablets or stone slabs. Prophetic books are essentially the result of intellectual scribal (rather than ecstatic-prophetic) performances. The Dead Sea Scrolls are the earliest available witnesses of the practice that transformed prophecy into scribal interpretation of authoritative tradition.

6. Conclusion

The material aspect of the documentation of prophecy is relevant in multiple ways. As I already mentioned, the material objects provide us the only access to the ancient prophetic phenomenon, hence we are dependent on the material preconditions of textual transmission. The restrictions of the material determine the length of the text and even the way of expression. A cuneiform report of 5x3 cm cannot contain long sermons, hence whatever is written on it is probably not the whole contents of the spoken oracle but a summary of how the scribe has understood its essential message. This highlights the agency of the scribe, not only as the author of the text, but also as the expert of the chosen material.

The scribe, however, is not the only agent involved in the production of textual artefacts. The material objects are usually commissioned by someone other than the scribe himself, and there is a reason for the existence of every manuscript. They are designed to fulfill a particular purpose, dependent on the needs of the commissioner and the context of the use of the manuscript. All this indicates that the text reflects much more than its author's intentions or private thinking. In the case of prophecy, the material objects are the results of the entire process of communication from the (possible) prophetic performance triggering the process, the writing of the text to the audience, and the afterlife of the artefact carrying the message. Moreover, the question of genre is not independent of the material preconditions of writing. Genre and purpose go hand in hand, and when the purpose of textual production determines the choice of material, the material defines the genre.

[61] See already M. Haran, "Book-Scrolls at the Beginning of the Second-Temple Period: The Transition from Papyrus to Skins," *HUCA* 14 (1983): 11–22 and cf. S. Sanders, *From Adapa to Enoch: Scribal Culture and Religious Vision in Judea and Babylon*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck (TSAJ 167), 2017, 21–23 who emphasizes the use of parchment as a major factor in the development of the scribal "ideology of reinvention" in Judah.

The examples I have briefly introduced to illustrate the case are all, in fact, somewhat exceptional. The Assyrian cuneiform tablet, the Deir Alla inscription, the ensemble of inscriptions from Hierapolis, as well as the Dead Sea scrolls containing passages we call "biblical" are edited texts using pre-existing material. They are all specimens of rewriting and editorial work that has caused shifts of meaning to the earlier works used as source materials. In each case, the production of the written artefact has had a different purpose and social location, implying complex relations between the agencies of the scribes, their sponsors, and their audiences.

The Assyrian collection of prophetic oracles is without doubt state-sponsored and prepared for political-theological and archival purposes. The tablet probably never had an audience outside the scribes and scholars who had access to the state archive. This artefact was indeed prepared by the literary elites for their own use, but at the same time, its availability to this particular audience served its purpose of propagation of royal ideology in a certain political situation even to audiences who had no access to the archive.

The implied audiences of the Deir Alla inscription and the Dead Sea Scrolls probably consisted of communities who may have used the texts for different purposes, such as teaching, learning, recitation, and demonstrating the divine presence. The delineation of the sponsorship and audience of the Deir Alla inscription depends on the interpretation of the artefact's function and its context. If the room was used as a classroom for students, the written object may have served educational purposes of the Aramaean government, and its linguistic content is likely to have been understood by the audience. If it was a sanctuary, it served the local population as a place where they could visit to encounter the divine, whereby the meaning of the written artefact may have been interpreted by its spatial and iconic rather than linguistic properties. In any case, as the written object was attached to the wall of a small room, we probably have to imagine a rather restricted circle of people as its audience.

The Dead Sea Scrolls with "biblical" content, again, were portable objects that were not attached to a specific site and could, therefore, have multiple owners and audiences in different localities. They may have been used by the Qumran community for teaching and/or worship, but they could be easily taken to another place to fulfill different needs of another community. That these artefacts were eventually hidden in caves indicates their high social value, thanks to which even we are able to read and appreciate them today for entirely different reasons. The Hierapolis slabs, due to their function as a privately sponsored commemorative monuments placed in one of the major temples of the city, are public to a much higher degree, and the aspect of sponsorship and public commemoration may be even more important than the contents of the text. These slabs provide another example of a written object whose meaning

was communicated to their audience by means of placing them into a socio-religiously prominent space—and whose afterlife as building blocks of the later temple indicates a change of their social value.

All written objects discussed above have been consciously produced as carriers of texts; the text written on them was probably an essential source of their communicative value. From this perspective one could maintain that the text indeed made the object and not the other way around.[62] Nevertheless, in each case the message is more than its wording, the artifact is more than a mere surface and platform of writing, and it communicates its meaning by different modes including its linguistic and non-linguistic properties.[63] The stone slabs at Hierapolis proclaim not only the words of Apollo but also the contribution of their sponsor; the plaster inscription at Deir Alla can be seen as a work of art, perhaps performing itself as a representation of the divine, or perhaps having an educational purpose; the Assyrian collection of prophecies belongs to the secret lore of scholars, and in the Dead Sea Scrolls, textualized prophecy appears as the source of scribal divination, as omens to be interpreted. All this multifarious interplay between the text, the artefact, and social agency shows that McLuhan's slogan "the medium is the message" is not unfounded when it comes to the materiality of prophecy in ancient sources.

Abstract

The written object is the primary context of every text, and the study of the material object may disclose things that the literary form of the text is unable to reveal, such as the social preconditions of the transmission of the text, the social status and function of a prophetic message, reasons why it was once written down, and the use and afterlife of a prophetic oracle as the object of interpretation, sometimes even as a visible monument. This is demonstrated with the help of four examples: an oracle collection from Nineveh; the Deir Alla inscription; the compilation of inscriptions from the Phrygian Hierapolis; and the scrolls containing "biblical" texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Main attention is paid to the artefacts, their context and probable function. Each source exemplifies a different kind of interplay between the text, the artefact, and social agency.

[62] Cf. n. 2.

[63] Cf. A. MANDELL, "Reading and Writing Remembrance in Canaan," 282–283.

BIBLICAL PROPHECY: WRITING AND MEDIA ASSOCIATED

Stéphanie Anthonioz*

If biblical studies are interested in prophecy as it concerns divine word and human proclamation, the question of writing as redaction has in the last decades become a major subject of research,[1] whereas that of the media and materials used for writing has been far less studied, certainly for lack of artifacts. What seems clear today is that Israelite prophecy was practiced in much the same way as it was in the surrounding world.[2] One may speak of prophecy, we should be reminded, when a person, through some cognitive experience (vision, audition, apparition, dream or else) becomes the recipient of a divine revelation and is conscious to be sent to reveal it by speech or symbolical gesture to a precise audience.[3] This etic definition highlights the principle of communication upon which the prophetic practice is based. It is not enough to perceive a word or a sign, one has to receive it, that is be able to interpret it, and then transmit it and know to whom to transmit it. Recently this "usual" definition has been improved by M. Nissinen in various ways.[4] One perspective is worth to be reminded regarding our present topic:

> (…) as the written evidence of prophecy demonstrates, the prophetic process of communication does not necessarily end when the message has reached its recipient, but may be prolonged by means of writing. Sometimes the written record, such as a letter, is the way by which the message is conveyed to the addressee, but a written version of the prophetic message may also be prepared for archival purposes, thus becoming part of the scribal tradition that can have a long afterlife. A prophecy once written down can be reinterpreted in a new historical situation and, as in the case of the Hebrew Bible, be-

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[1] See C. CLIVAZ *et al*. (eds), *Écritures et réécritures: la reprise interprétative des traditions fondatrices par la littérature biblique et extra-biblique. Cinquième Colloque international du RRENAB, Universités de Genève et Lausanne, 10-12 juin 2010*, Leuven: University Press (BETL 248), 2012; P. R. DAVIES, T. RÖMER (eds), *Writing the Bible: Scribes, Scribalism and Script*, Durham: Acumen, 2013; M. NISSINEN, "Since When do Prophets Write?," in *In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes. Studies in the Biblical Text in Honour of Anneli Aejmelaeus*, K. De Troyer, M. Law and M. Liljeström (eds), Leuven: Peeters, 2014, 585–606.

[2] M. NISSINEN, *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives*, Oxford: University Press, 2017, 326–355.

[3] M. WEIPPERT, "Aspekte israelitischer Prophetie im Lichte verwandter Erscheinungen des Alten Orients," in *Ad bene et fideliter seminandum*, G. Mauer (ed.), Kevelaer: Verlag Butzon & Bercker, 1988, 287–319.

[4] M. NISSINEN, *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives*, 20–23.

> come the object of a long process of literary interpretation, or Fortschreibung. Following Armin Lange, I make a difference between written prophecy, that is, written records of orally delivered prophetic oracles, and literary prophecy, which covers both scribal interpretation and recontextualization of earlier written prophecies and inventing entirely new prophetic texts.[5]

This addendum shows that in the phenomenological and comparative approach pursued by the author, prophecy does not end with its initial occurrence. It is continued through its different recontextualizations. The question of transmission is thus primordial since by definition prophecy is fundamentally oral and punctual, responding as other divinatory practices to *ad hoc* situations. However, the sources in the ancient Near East are rather meager when studying prophecy in general. Certainly, the paucity of sources is related to the fundamentally oral nature of the practice. Let us review them in the frame of this introduction.

At Mari, letters show that prophetic proclamations are made in the temple, often during the cult. The one who hears the word is concerned to report to the king. Prophetic proofs (lock of hair, cord or fringe from the mantle) are at times required in order to authenticate the message and its author, in case the prophet is not the transmitter. In many examples, the prophet from a near city comes in person to the palace of the governor who directly communicates the message to the king of Mari.[6] Certainly, many prophecies were directly addressed to the king during an audience and as such have left no written trace. Clearly the epistolary corpus at Mari only partially reflects the phenomenon.[7] Moreover, it only informs about political and official affairs leaving private prophecy mostly silent.

D. Charpin has shown two unique cases of written prophecy in the archives of the temple of Kititum in Nerebtum (modern Ishchali), in the kingdom of Ešnunna.[8] Accordingly there should be no reason for the author to consider this device as exceptional. On the contrary, it should only be natural that prophecies were put to writing as soon as they were heard and then archived by the

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[5] M. NISSINEN, *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives*, 22.

[6] Thus Qîšti-Dîrîtim, *āpilum* in the city of Dîrîtum, goes at the entrance of the palace of Mari to deliver his message of victory to Šibtu queen and spouse of Zimrî-Lîm (*ana bāb ekall[im illikam k]īam išpuram...*). Cf. M. NISSINEN, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, n° 18 (ARM 26 208).

[7] D. CHARPIN, "Prophètes et rois dans le Proche-Orient amorrite," in *Prophètes et rois, Bible et Proche-Orient*, Paris: Cerf (Lectio Divina hors série), 2001, 37.

[8] D. CHARPIN, "Le prophétisme dans le Proche-Orient d'après les archives de Mari (XVIIIe siècle av. J.-C.)," in *Les recueils prophétiques de la Bible: origines, milieux, et contexte proche-oriental*, Genève: Labor et Fides (Le Monde de la Bible 64), 2012, 45–46. In the same way J.-M. Durand had noted that the king of Mari addressed letters to the gods and that some were preserved on the same tablet which should be the sign of some archiving. J.-M. DURAND, *Archives épistolaires de Mari* I/1, Paris: ERC, 1988, 408.

priest *šangum*. After this archiving, the prophetic word could be either transmitted orally directly to the person concerned or written again on a tablet to be sent. These conclusions are rather new since it has usually been considered that writing was an aid only to communication.[9]

The most important witness to West-Semitic prophecy in the first-millennium B.C.E. Levant however is the narrative discovered in 1967, written on plaster fragments, in the site of Deir ʿAlla (identified to Succot or Penuel East of the Jordan on the river Jabbok). The inscription is dated to the first part of the VIII[th] c. and its comprehension still uncertain.[10] However, the literary and cultural significance of the inscription is immense. Written by an expert scribe, in a unique Aramaean dialect, in red and black ink, it represents the copy of an excerpt from the "book (ספר) of Balaam, son of Beor, the man who sees the gods (אש חזה אלהן)." The oracle is disastrous, and its signs recall the cataclysm of the flood in Mesopotamian literary sources. The inscription may not be dissociated from the geographical site nor from the historical context in which it was put down to writing. It seems that the site was one of textile production and that a cultic chamber was built against it, precisely where the inscription was found. In a time of Aramaean expansion in the region, it represents the blessing of the god El for the newcomers but a curse against the residents.[11] If the oracle was not pronounced by Balaam, it was put in his mouth for authority sake. Balaam was so famous that his memory found its way in the biblical texts, this time to bless Israel and curse its enemies (Num 22–24).[12] How can we explain such a prophetic text on such a medium and in such an archaeological context? Obviously, the plaster material on which the inscription is written offers a good readability in a religious context, why? Is it to repeat and reedit the curse of Balaam over enemies in time of troubles between the kingdoms of Aram and Ammon-Gilead? If so, the writing is fundamentally divinatory in

[9] M. NISSINEN, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, 14; K. VAN DER TOORN, "Mesopotamian Prophecy Between Immanence and Transcendence: A Comparison of Old Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian Prophecy," in *Prophecy in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context*, M. Nissinen (ed.), Atlanta: SBL Press, 2000, 73.

[10] É. PUECH, "Bala'am and Deir ʿAlla," in *The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam*, G. H. van Kooten, J. van Ruiten (eds), Leiden: Brill, 2008, 25–47; *id*., "Le texte 'ammonite' de Deir ʿAlla: Les admonitions de Balaam (première partie)," in *La vie de la Parole*, Paris: Desclée, 1987, 13–30; J.-W. WESSELIUS, "Thoughts about Balaam: The Historical Background of the Deir Alla Inscription on Plaster," *BiOr* 44 (1987): 589–599; J. A. HACKETT, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla*, Chico: Scholars Press, 1980.

[11] B. B. SCHMIDT, "Memorializing Conflict: Toward an Iron Age 'Shadow' History of Israel's Earliest Literature," in *Contextualizing Israel's Sacred Writings: Ancient Literacy, Orality, and Literary Production*, B. B. Schmidt (ed.), Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015, 116–120.

[12] S. ANTHONIOZ, *Le prophétisme biblique: de l'idéal à la réalité*, Paris: Cerf (Lectio Divina 261), 2013, 54–64. The historical hypothesis proposed by B. B. Schmidt confirms in some way the literary analysis of these oracles, first pronounced against Israel, then reinterpreted to its glory.

nature and provides the means for divine speech to endure, whether it is read or not. That is the blessing and curse endure through the presence or sign of the writing. Thus, the question: is the writing of oracles another divinatory practice? It is possible that due to the lacunar corpus at hand no answer may be reached. It is also possible that according to place and time the answer should be differentiated: in some contexts, the writing may have been only a mode of communication; in others, of archiving, and yet in others, it may have acquired a peculiar function endowing the writing with the power of the divine oracle. Writing becomes the divine sign par excellence. It is true that the very nature of writing –the sign itself is the message–, as stated by D. Katz,[13] attest to the efficacy and power of divine speech.

But let us continue our review. Neo-Assyrian sources under the reigns of Assarhaddon (680-669) and Aššurbanipal (668-627) offer the testimony of a prophetic collection that show obvious editorial processes.[14] Prophecy is no longer a matter of communication but of literary composition. Divine words are put down to writing for the sake of memory and history. The intention is not only to make the word endure but to give it the highest status of literary texts that must be passed down from generation to generation. One could say that it becomes part of the treasures from of old, "from before the flood." Moreover, prophecy is no longer the interpretation of one oral message heard and transmitted but the interpretation of a written word with the multiplication of significations that the written sign has over the oral one.

One should also add one last document to our review, which is chronologically dated much later, to the first century, and even more difficult to interpret, the *Hazon Gabriel* or *Gabriel's Revelation*, as it has come to be known.[15] The document is a limestone inscription from the Lisan Peninsula in the Dead Sea

[13] D. Katz reconsidering the famous plot between Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta remarked: "The advantage of the cuneiform scripts is that the sign itself is the message, and therefore the recipient can understand it without having previous training. On the level of the plot, equating a single sign with the message has an ideological value, which is the advantage of the logographic cuneiform signs." D. KATZ, "Ups and Downs in the Career of Enmerkar king of Uruk," in *Fortune and Misfortune in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 60th RAI at Warsaw, 21-25 2014*, O. Drewnowska and M. Sandowicz (eds), Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2017, 204.

[14] The basis of the Ninevite corpus represents nine tablets collecting oracles pronounced by different prophets. Six of them contain only one oracle and four of them are in the so-called *u'iltu* format. The remaining three are in the habitual format for literary texts with several columns on each side (*ṭuppu*). These were specifically conceived to be archived and different witnesses demonstrate that the information was copied from *u'iltu* tablets containing oracular report. Once copied these tablets were destroyed.

[15] This document is usually not considered a modern forgery even though it was not found in situ. M. HENZE (ed.), *Hazon Gabriel: New Readings of the Gabriel Revelation*, Atlanta: SBL Press (Early Judaism and its Literature 29), 2011; D. HAMIDOVIĆ, "An Eschatological Drama in Hazon Gabriel: Fantasy or Historical Background?," *Semitica* 54 (2012): 233–250; *id.*, "La vision de Gabriel," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 89 (2009): 147–168.

and presents 87 lines written in two columns with ink, as one would expect on a skin or papyrus. While the front of the stone is polished, the back is rough, suggesting it was mounted in a wall. D. Hamidović has proposed that it had a didactic function and that the genre could be defined as "visionary apocalypse."[16] However, as the author himself agrees, since the stela was not discovered in its archaeological context, its function may still be debated. What is important for our purpose is that the stela was not only exposed but also big enough to be read from a distance and if not to be contemplated, so that at least its public setting is quite evident. In this case, it is a public witness for all, to be seen and acknowledged, no longer belonging to the secrecy of the divinatory or scribal realm.

Through this short review of prophetic witnesses in Mesopotamia and the Levant, it appears that prophecy may have one theoretical definition, yet with regard to media and materials used, the definition is modified and corrected. The question of the medium and material becomes essential to the definition of prophecy and according to its function, the status of divine speech does change, from punctual to perpetual, and from secrecy to public acknowledgment. More precisely in recontextualizing the prophecy, the medium determines its function.[17] It is thus the aim of this paper to address the question of the relation between the prophetic word and its medium in biblical texts so as to understand better what the function of prophecy is. Two instances will be analyzed, the book of the law as divine speech revealed to Moses the prophet in relation with the tables, and prophetic books in relation with the scrolls when these are textually referred to. This contribution will bring to light the importance of written media in conferring authority to divine speech, that is Yhwh's speech. In a particular way, the motif of duplication will be shown to be a highly literary as well as theological strategy, yet embedded in ancient practices of writing, to confirm and authorize divine speech as it is written. What we will bring to light are the very foundations of the concept of revelation.

[16] D. HAMIDOVIC, "La vision de Gabriel:" 160.

[17] This is indeed what M. NISSINEN, *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives*, says p. 48: "Sources of prophecy are ultimately sources of the reception of prophecy; in this sense they are always secondary with regard to the prophetic performance, every source is the result of a process of selection and adaptation in a given context for specific purposes. The purpose and function of prophetic literature is not the same as the purpose and function of the prophetic performance. Texts often hide as much as they reveal, and, therefore, our picture of ancient prophecy will always be incomplete and partially distorted."

1. TORA

1.1. *The* Sefer *or "Writing" of the Law*

We shall begin by looking at the references to the *sefer* of the law, since it is one of the most important reference that can be found concerning writing in the Bible. These references involve a certain number of variants. In the book of Exodus, one speaks of the "book, literally the *sefer*,[18] of the covenant" (ספר הברית) that Moses read to the people after he had put it down to writing (Exod 24:4-7). This *sefer* of the covenant seems to refer to the first legal collection of the book of Exodus, that is the ten words found in Exod 20:1-17 as well as the code of the covenant in the following chapters (Exod 20:22–23:33). In Deuteronomy, the *sefer* is most commonly associated with the notion of the law (rather than of the covenant) whatever the formulation.[19] Clearly the references to the writing of the law are clustered in the last part of the book of Deuteronomy, which may witness to its final editorial process or even to that of the Pentateuch that Deuteronomy closes. The writing of the *sefer* has been the object of a masterful literary demonstration by J.-P. Sonnet that clarifies the different assets of writing in the book.[20] The author underlines first the urgency of Moses' words which is caused by the fact that the people are about to cross the Jordan but not Moses as he has been forbidden to do so. However, Moses writes nothing until Deut 31:9 which is practically the end of the book. His writing thus solves the question of the effective transmission of the revelation from one side to the other of the river Jordan. But this writing is connected to its solemn reading which is to take place every seven years as a renewal of the event at Sinai or Horeb (31:11). Being proclaimed, the written text stands for the "new edition" (*réédition*) of the event of the revelation. The founding authority of this writing is none other than the divine writing of the ten words (Deut 5:22). According to the book of Deuteronomy, Moses transmits the legal corpus. How-

[18] F.-L. HOSSFELD, E. REUTER, "סֵפֶר, *sēper*," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Volume X, G. J. Botterweck *et al*. (eds), Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999, 326–341.

[19] "A copy of this law on a *sefer* (את משנה התורה הזאת על ספר) in the presence of the Levitical priests" (Deut 17:18); "all the words of this law that are written in this *sefer*" (את כל דברי התורה הזאת הכתובים בספר הזה, Deut 28:58); "his commandments and decrees that are written in this *sefer* of the law" (מצותיו וחקתיו הכתובה בספר התורה הזה, Deut 30:10); "When Moses had finished writing down in a *sefer* the words of this law (את דברי התורה הזאת על ספר, Deut 31:24); "Take this *sefer* of the law" (את ספר התורה הזה, Deut 31:26).

[20] J.-P. SONNET, "'Lorsque Moïse eut achevé d'écrire' (Dt 31,24): une 'théorie narrative' de l'écriture dans le Pentateuque," *Recherches de science religieuse* 90 (2002): 509–524. Also from the same author "The Fifth Book of the Pentateuch: Deuteronomy in Its Narrative Dynamic," *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 3 (2012): 197–234 and *The Book within the Book: Writing in Deuteronomy*, Leiden: Brill (Biblical Interpretation Series 14), 1997.

ever, he does not repeat word for word what he has been instructed on the mount of Horeb (which is what took place in the Sinai theophany and can be read in the covenant code), he rephrases this revelation in a didactic manner for future generations who will live on in the land. By this manner, in lieu of repeating the covenant code, he introduces its Deuteronomic reformulation!

In the final form of the book of Deuteronomy, the *sefer* refers to different textual realities,[21] and the law may designate one particular collection or the book of Deuteronomy and why not even the library of the Tora as a whole. Whatever it may be, by the narrative staging, Deutero-nomy, literally the second law, does not replace the other preceding laws, but clearly acquires a similar status. The law of Deuteronomy comes to stand next to Exodus and Leviticus. By this narrative staging, Moses is responsible for all legal codes, be they part of the Sinai revelation (Exod 19–Num 10) or its recapitulation (Deut 12–26).[22] The very writing of the law participates in the status of revelation: divine speech will not change, and the writing testifies to it. Even though, it is at least three law codes with all their differences and at times contradictions that are at hand! Clearly, this analysis shows how the redactors made use of the authority of writing to extend and renew revelation itself.

If the law is clearly written down, one must equally insist on its orality: according to the narrative fiction of the Pentateuch, the law as divine speech is first and foremost orally transmitted (Exod 19): it is heard, divine voice, before it is put to writing by the hand of Moses (Exod 24:4; 34:28) but also by the hand of God (Exod 24:12; 31:18; 34:1; Deut 4:13; 5:22; 9:10) with a confusion that serves to strengthen Moses' authority. This law of which Moses is both the recipient and mediator signs what prophecy should be according to the book of Deuteronomy:

> Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses (ולא קם נביא עוד בישראל כמשה), whom Yhwh knew face to face (אשר ידעו יהוה פנים אל פנים). (Deut 34:10).

Prophecy is fundamentally oral and writing finally attests to it, not as any other sign would (lock of hair and so on, according to divinatory practices) but as the sign par excellence, if we remember D. Katz' definition of "the sign itself as the message."

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[21] Other instances of writing may be mentioned. Moses is thus writing another time as he is instructed by God to write a song and teach it to his people (31:19): this is precisely Deut 32 tracing the history of the people and witnessing against them. Moreover, the people are also invited to write the Tora on stones once they will have crossed the Jordan and entered the land (Deut 27:2-3.8). They are also commanded to write portions of the law on amulets or doorposts (Deut 11).

[22] T. RÖMER, "L'autorité du livre dans les trois parties de la Bible hébraïque," *Écritures et réécritures: la reprise interprétative des traditions fondatrices par la littérature biblique et extra-biblique*, C. Clivaz *et al.* (eds), Leuven: Peeters (BETL 248), 2012, 88.

Let us insist on the importance of writing in the construction of revelation: divine speech leaves the prophetic and divinatory sphere, its orality, that is subject to human conditions and historical contingencies. Indeed, biblical prophecy inaugurates a new prophetic form, as it is redefined as legal and henceforth written and as such enduring.[23] However, the very construction it is undergoing allows it to be enlarged and therefore contradicted or corrected. Writing is so important to the notion of revelation, that it may be considered itself an *authority conferring strategy*, to take up H. Najman's concept concerning the book of *Jubilees*.[24] However, in biblical texts, not only writing but precisely the medium or material, in this case the tables, confirm the divine authority of the prophetic law.

1.2. *Tables or Tablets*

Though tablets are most common and the main medium of communication in the cuneiform world, they are poorly attested in biblical sources except for the law. Tables (לחת/לוח) are indeed present at the Sinai revelation.[25] They are at times designated as "stone table(s)" (לחת אבן, Exod 31:18 /את לחת האבן, Exod 24:12) or "table(s) made out of stones" (with a plural form, שני לחת אבנים, Exod 34:1.4; Deut 4:13; 5:22; 10:1.3; לוחת האבנים, Deut 9:9.10.11; 1 Kgs 8:9).[26] As we noted previously, the confusion is kept along the narrative as to the author or writer of the law, since at times it is Moses, at other times God. It is striking therefore that the reference to the medium of the tables is made only in the case where God is writing the law.[27] In this sense, it makes clear that the medium not only attests divine speech but also materializes divine revelation. Writing as the sign of the message is therefore reinforced by the materiality of the me-

[23] S. ANTHONIOZ, *Le prophétisme biblique: de l'idéal à la réalité*, 75.

[24] H. Najman building on the work of F. García Martínez did recognize four of these strategies in the book of *Jubilees*: writing on heavenly tablets, dictation of the angel (of the presence), mosaic attribution or pseudepigraphy and finally interpretation as revelation. See H. NAJMAN, "Angels at Sinai: Exegesis, Theology and Interpretative Authority," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 7 (2000): 313–333; *ead*., "Interpretation as Primordial Writing: Jubilees and Its Authority Conferring Strategies," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 30 (1999): 379–410; F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ, "The Heavenly Tablets in the Book of Jubilees," in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, M. Albani (ed.), Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1997, 243–260; *id*., "Las Tablas Celestes en el Libro de los Jubileos," in *Palabra y vida*, A. Vargas Machuca (ed.), Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 1984, 333–349.

[25] Exod 24:12; 27:8; 31:18; 32 :15.16.19; 34:1.4.28; 38:7; Deut 4:13; 5:22; 9:9.15.17; 10:1; 1 Kgs 7:36; 8:9; 2 Chr 5:10; Prov 3:3; 7:3; Cant 8:9; Isa 30:8; Jer 17:1; Ezek 27:5; Ha 2:2. See A. BAUMANN, "לוּח, *lûaḥ*," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Volume VII, G. J. Botterweck *et al*. (eds), Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995, 480–483.

[26] Hebrew quotations do not take into account orthographic variations such as *plene* writings.

[27] With one exception, the stones upon which the people have to copy the law after crossing the Jordan in Deut 27:2-3.8.

dium, which thus becomes another sign, a witness so to say to the message, to divine speech. The biblical strategy that witnesses to the medium/the tables only when God is said to be the author of the law makes clear the three-dimensional reality of revelation or its materialization. Not only writing but the medium written upon/the tables become another *authority conferring strategy*: in other words, the stones make revelation true!

Moreover, we must underline the strategical duplication of the medium, independently from the singular or plural use of the material. Indeed, the tables are two in number (Exod 31:18; 32:15; 34:1.4.29; Deut 4:13; 5:22; 9:10.11.15. 17; 10:1.3; 1 Kgs 8,9; 2 Chr 5:10), and they are also written on both sides (but only one occurrence of this notification in Exod 32:15). Finally, they must be written twice, since Moses in his wrath before the golden calf and the infidelity of the people is led to break the first tables at the foot of the mountain (Exod 32:19; 34:1; Deut 9:17; 10:1-4). If we recapitulate these data keeping in mind the phenomenon of double writer, divine and Mosaic, we must admit that this insistence is not by chance. The narrative of the breaking of the tables has often been compared to that of the burnt scroll in the book of Jeremiah, as we shall see. These two narratives by the fiction of sudden and violent destruction witness to the fact that divine speech is materialized by but not dependent upon the medium. In other words, the material also testifies to the immateriality of divine speech and its enduring nature.

At this point we have endeavored to demonstrate that in the biblical law, not only the writing of the divine prophetic law but the medium upon which this law is written are authority conferring strategies. This is strengthened by the strategy of duplication which works as another witness as in the case of a trial: writing is the sign, the medium is the first witness, and the duplicated medium, a second witness.[28] These witnesses testify to the fact that speech, in this case the law, is divine, that is true, effective and enduring. I wonder if this is not precisely the meaning of the expression "tables of testimony" (לחת העדת, Exod 31:18; 32,15; 34:29).[29] By their doubling, the media serve to testify to

[28] In a comparative way, this may be enlightened by D. Charpin's study on the relation between gesture and speech in judicial process, especially "(…) un contrat entre deux individus se caractérisait par la pratique de gestes symboliques engageant celui qui les accomplissait, en même temps que par l'énoncé de paroles solennelles, le tout en présence de témoins gardant en mémoire l'affaire conclue. L'existence d'une telle pratique ritualisée lors de la conclusion d'un contrat, ainsi que le recours, en cas de contestation, au témoignage et à la procédure du serment, voire de l'ordalie, font considérer le geste et la parole comme constitutifs d'un « prédroit » babylonien. Toutefois, le soin mis à conserver et à transmettre les documents juridiques (actes d'achat, d'adoption, d'héritage, etc.) montre l'importance qui s'attachait au texte écrit." D. CHARPIN, *Lire et écrire à Babylone*, Paris: PUF, 2008, 131.

[29] This expression is found in the book of Exodus whereas in Deuteronomy one finds the expression "tables of the covenant" (לחת הברית, Deut 9:9.11.15).

the authenticity and authority of the writing: they give witness to the word and how much more powerful when this word is divine.[30]

1.3. *Once again about the book of* Jubilees

Interestingly we may wonder if the book of *Jubilees* as itself a *repetition* does not build on the same strategy. This would lead us to understand commentaries, and their development during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, in a new way as they renew the authority of the book they comment. In fact, the literary setting for *Jubilees* is Moses' first forty-day sojourn on top of Mount Sinai where he receives the "tables of the law and the commandments" (Prologue cf Exod 24:12-18). However, the opening lines make clear that this is "the history of the division of the days of the law and of the testimony (Prologue)."[31] The deity than commands the angel of the presence to dictate the message to Moses from the "heavenly tablets," that is, the entire story of the remaining 49 chapters (already recorded on these celestial documents). Moses's role is simply to write down what the angel reads.[32] As analyzed by J. C. VanderKam,

> As a result, the contents of the book are presented as revelation in the form of direct speech by the angel of the presence to Moses, and the several stages in the process of revelation guarantee the accuracy and authenticity of the message: God commands that the message be communicated, that message is already fixed on heavenly tablets, a

[30] K. VAN DER TOORN, "The Iconic Book: Analogies between the Babylonian Cult of Images and the Veneration of the Torah," *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, K. van der Toorn (ed.), Leuven: Peeters, 1997, 229–248. This is different than the point noted by K. van der Toorn highlighting the antiquity of the motif of duplication in Mesopotamian sources and particularly that of cultic images. This duplication was understood as "renewal" (*tēdištu*) of an original at the time of its restoration. For the author, Tora has become this image and icon of Israel and he explains this innovation on account of the historical and exilic background. Why did the Deuteronomists have recourse to such a Mosaic mythology or subterfuge? For the author, the profusion of images was the cause for it brought about the vulgarization of the sacred. Introducing the text as religious image and symbol was a way to restore the sacred and keep it away from mortals. Only specialists of writing, *i.e.* the scribes could access and share the interpretation of divine words. In a very stimulating manner, the author connects this accession of the text in the realm of the sacred to the anti-iconic laws also found in Deuteronomy: the matter is not so much to state more rigorous religious practices than to establish a monopoly in religious authority. This is the creation of a real "scribocracy."

[31] Cf. "the tablets (which told) of the divisions of the years from the time the law and the testimony were created -for the weeks of jubilees, year by year in their full number, and their jubilees from [the time of the creation until] the time of the new creation." (1.29).

[32] The mediation of the angel is recalled whenever the topic under consideration is of importance (2.1, creation and sabbath; 6.20, 22, festival of weeks; 6.35, 38, the calendar and timing of festivals; 15.33, circumcision; 16.5, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah for sexual offences; 30.12, 17, 21, episode of Shechem; 48.4, 13 (the exodus); 50.1-2, 4, chronology; and 50.6, 13 (sabbath). See J. C. VANDERKAM, *The Book of Jubilees*, Sheffield: Academic Press, 2001, 87.

member of the highest-ranking class of angels reads it to Moses, and no less an authority than Moses himself makes the earthly copy of the heavenly message.[33]

The purpose is not indeed to replace the "first law" (6.22), "the tables of the law and the commandments," but to save them from being misconstrued. In this sense, *Jubilees* becomes another text witnessing to the revelation of the "first law" and the authority conferring strategy does reside also in this very repetition or duplication of this narrative law though its content is enlarged as we have seen in Deutero-nomy itself.

Moreover, in diverse passages of *Jubilees*, one may read that Moses wrote down the contents of the revelation (1.5, 7, 26; 2.1; 23.32; 33.18), while in others the angel says that he is writing them for Moses (1.27; 30.12, 21; 50.6, 13), which reminds of the authorial confusion between Moses and God in the Tora. This confusion may be due to the fact that the two Hebrew letters *yod* and *waw* are often source of scribal error since the verbs for "dictate" (literally "make to write") and "write" are virtually indistinguishable in some forms and as a result, where the Ethiopic text says that the angel wrote for Moses, the Hebrew original probably said that the angel dictated to Moses as shown in the fragment 4Q216 4.6 (להכתיב).[34] However, the manuscripts from the caves of Qumran are too fragmentary to correct every instance and we should keep in mind that even if the confusion is caused by scribal error, it is not without high theological repercussion concerning the divine authority of the writer: of course God himself is the final authority of what is written down!

Finally, the connection is clearly made in the book of *Jubilees* between the "heavenly tablets" and "testimony."[35] They are not only a repository of an enormous amount of information about human history, but also of divine laws concerning men and creation as well.[36] All the connections that can be drawn concerning testimony in *Jubilees* do point to the written laws as testimonies

[33] J. C. VANDERKAM, *The Book of Jubilees*, 12.

[34] J. C. VANDERKAM, *The Book of Jubilees*, 17–18; D. HAMIDOVIC, "Jubilés," in *La bibliothèque de Qumrân. 2; Torah: Exode, Lévitique, Nombres*, K. Berthelot, T. Legrand (eds), Paris: Cerf, 2010, 90–91.

[35] The noun "testimony" is paired with the term "heavenly tablets" in 1.29; 4.30; 16.28; 32,29; 23.32; 30.19; 31.32 and in *Jub* 1.8 the entire book is a testimony. J. C. VANDERKAM, *The Book of Jubilees*, 93.

[36] J. C. VANDERKAM, *The Book of Jubilees*, 90. According to F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ, "The Heavenly Tablets in the Book of Jubilees," 243–260, a fivefold taxonomy may be proposed regarding the content of these heavenly tablets: 1) Torah of Moses, 2) Record of deeds, both good and evil, 3) Not only past events but also future events, a kind of history of the world, 4) Calendar and feasts and 5) New interpretations or "amplifications" of the biblical law. See also recently C. UEHLINGER, "La figure de l'ange révélateur – à quoi bon?," in *Entre dieux et hommes: anges, démons et autres figures intermédiaires. Actes du colloque organisé par le Collège de France, Paris, les 19 et 20 mai 2014*, T. Römer *et al*. (eds), Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (OBO 286), 2017, 293–323.

beyond persons.[37] If so the nature of the written testimony is very close to that analyzed in biblical texts: what is written and engraved testifies as a witness would and in this sense the whole book of *Jubilees* becomes the witness/testimony to the truth of the revelation of the "Law and commandments" as it develops and reinterprets it. The importance of the notion of testimony in the book does confirm the importance of writing and the motif of doubling as authority conferring strategies in themselves. Indeed, when *Jub* 23.32 says that the heavenly tablets are a testimony for eternal generations, is it not rather the book of *Jubilees* as it is put down to writing that has become to "true" testimony and witness to the "eternal writing?"

2. THE *NEVIIM*

2.1. *Written Prophecy*

Testimonies to written prophecy in biblical texts are much less frequent compared to those of the law.[38] However one also speaks of "writing prophets" as if they had been the authors of their own "book." Today, it is more common to speak of redactional or editorial processes than authorial ones, to study the scribal milieu rather than the particular authors. The book of Jeremiah offers the widest references to the notion of writing in the library of the Prophets and this has been widely studied.[39] Many indices of textual composition appear as for example editorial commentaries (Jer 36:32), inclusions (25:9a referring to

[37] Testimony is connected to the prophets of old as witnesses (cf 1.12; 2 Chr 24.19; 36.15-16; Neh 9.26). It is also connected to moral judgement (see Enoch in 4.18, 19, 22 cf 4Q227 frag. 2 1.3 or Noah in 7.20). And the angel also testifies, and the recipient is Moses who is to relay the message to the Israelites (6.38) so that testimony serves to inform, remind and warn. Moreover, the noun "testimony" is paired with the term "law" (1.26, 29; 2.24; 2.17-33; 3.14) and that testimonial aspect here appears to be what *Jubilees* adds to the Pentateuchal text.

[38] Isa 29:11-12.18; 30:8; 34:4.16; 37:14; 39:1; 50:1; Jer 3:8; 25:13; 29:1.25.29; 30:2; 32:10-16.44; 36:2-18.32; 45:1; 51:60.63; Ezek 2:9; Nah 1:1; Mal 3:16.

[39] S. ANTHONIOZ, "Aux sources de la pseudépigraphie. Le cas de Jérémie," *Études théologiques et religieuses* 91 (2016): 563–582; T. RÖMER, "From Prophet to Scribe: Jeremiah, Huldah and the Invention of the Book," in *Writing the Bible. Scribes, Scribalism and Script*, P. R. Davies, T. Römer (eds), Durham: Acumen, 2013, 86–96; K. SCHMID, "L'auto-compréhension des livres prophétiques comme littérature de réécriture," in *Écritures et réécritures. La reprise interprétative des traditions fondatrices par la littérature biblique et extra-biblique. Cinquième colloque international du RRENAB, Universités de Genève et Lausanne, 10-12 juin 2010*, C. Clivaz *et al*. (eds), Leuven: University Press (BETL 248), 2012, 126; J. FERRY, "'Le livre dans le livre': lecture de Jérémie 36," in *Les recueils prophétiques de la Bible: origines, milieux, et contexte proche-oriental*, J.-D. Macchi *et al*. (eds), Genève: Labor et Fides (Le Monde de la Bible 64), 2012, 283–306; E. A. KNAUF, "Audiatur et altera pars: Zur Logik der Pentateuch-Redaktion," *Bibel und Kirche* 53 (1998): 118–126; T. RÖMER, "Transformations in Deuteronomistic and Biblical Historiography: On 'Book-Finding' and Other Literary Strategies," *ZAW* 109 (1997): 1–11.

and concluding 1:15), colophons (25:13; 45:1; 51:64), internal quotations (30:5-6 referring to 6:24). Other references to writing may be noted, letters and documents (3:8; 29:1; 30:2; 32:14) and the famous burnt scroll (36). As for this burnt scroll, diverse realities behind the reference have been conjectured and whatever it is they do witness to some kind of meta-discourse concerning the composition and production of the book of Jeremiah.

Other prophetic books may not be compared on this point. References are rather few and usually less explicit.[40] Certainly, scribal processes are less assured or obviously prophecy remains inherently part of the oral and at times visual domain, so that it is more common to speak of oracles, visions, and words of God whatever term is used. Thus, the context indicates how divine words were understood and conceptualized but not the media nor the materials on which they might have been kept for record and transmission.

2.2. *Prophetic scrolls*

References to a scroll (מגלה),[41] as common medium for writing in the Levant, are therefore not many in biblical texts,[42] though one may note a cluster of them in the narrative of the burnt scroll (Jer 36). Just as for the tables of the law, we mentioned some confusion concerning the writer, whether Moses or God, one has to underline in Jer 36 the qualification of the scroll as "words of Yhwh" (דברי יהוה) but from the mouth of Jeremiah (מפי ירמיהו, 36:4 cf 36:6). An element is however completely new, the presence of the scribe Baruch son of Neriah: it is he who writes (36:4), he who reads (36:6). But it is the prophet Jeremiah who is commanded by Yhwh to take the scroll (קח לך מגלת ספר, 36:2) and even more to write all these words against Israel and Juda, against all the nations, since the days of Josiah to these days (36:2). Immediately after such command, Jeremiah calls in Baruch who writes at the mouth of Jeremiah. The editorial process is once more put to the stage. This time the scribe takes the role of Moses: he writes the words of God. The authority of the scribal milieu

[40] Isa 8:1; 29:11-12; 30:8; 34:4 see also 4:3; 10:1.19; 29:18; 37:14; 39:1; 44:5; 50:1; 65:6; Ezek 2:8–3:3; 24:2; 37:16.20; 43:11 see also 13:9; Hab 2:2; Zech 5:1 and also Hos 8:12; Mal 3:16. See A. SCHELLENBERG, "A 'Lying Pen of the Scribes' (Jer 8:8)?: Orality and Writing in the Formation of Prophetic Books," in *The Interface of Orality and Writing*, A. Weissenrieder, R. B. Coote (eds), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010, 292–294.

[41] Psa 40:8; Jer 36:2.4.6.14.20. 23.25.27.32; Ezek 2:9; 3:1; Zech 5:1.

[42] Two references to a scroll may be noted in the prophetic library but they are of less importance for our purpose yet confirming our point, "a flying scroll" (מגלה עפה, Zech 5:1-2) in the context of a prophetic vision, the sixth in the book of Zechariah, announcing curse and testifying by both sides of the scroll that what is written will indeed happen. The second occurrence is the scroll that the prophet Ezekiel must eat (Ezek 2:9; 3:1-3). The prophet is then commanded to go to the house of Israel and proclaim the words of God (3:4). The medium attests to the nature of the prophetic word as divine and written that is perpetual and indelible.

is enhanced and undeniable. And this authority is founded on the very understanding of the revelation at Sinai that is to say the divine word written down and accredited by an authorized prophet. The foundation of this authority is all the more similar as it is grounded on the narrative fiction or tragic device of duplication:

> Now, after the king had burned the scroll with the words that Baruch wrote at Jeremiah's dictation, the word of Yhwh came to Jeremiah: [28]Take another scroll and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll, which King Jehoiakim of Judah has burned. [29]And concerning King Jehoiakim of Judah you shall say: Thus says Yhwh, You have dared to burn this scroll, saying, Why have you written in it that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and will cut off from it human beings and animals? [30]Therefore thus says Yhwh concerning King Jehoiakim of Judah: He shall have no one to sit upon the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat by day and the frost by night. [31]And I will punish him and his offspring and his servants for their iniquity; I will bring on them, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and on the people of Judah, all the disasters with which I have threatened them- but they would not listen. [32]Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to the secretary Baruch son of Neriah, who wrote on it at Jeremiah's dictation all the words of the scroll that King Jehoiakim of Judah had burned in the fire; and many similar words were added to them. (36:27-32)

The chapter thus ends as it had started: the divine word is addressed to Jeremiah to command him to take a scroll and write over it. Immediately Jeremiah calls in Baruch who obeys. The confusion concerning the writer remains. The scribal authority is that of a prophet. But the authority is the same, grounded in the motive of the doubling and multiplication of witnesses whether human or material.

As far as we have reached, we may assert that the material or medium as well as the motif of duplication are the foundation "stones" of divine revelation in different biblical texts, the Tora and the book of Jeremiah. We have argued that this very notion of writing could be compared to the role of witnesses in any trial or judicial process. I would like to argument this point by the few letters and ostraca that have been recovered in ancient Judea.

2.3. *Ostraca and letters*

The sending of letters is a prophetic reality well attested in biblical texts.[43] As we saw in the introduction, it was also common in Mari. It may be confirmed

[43] Zedekiah's messengers have brought Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in Babylon (Jer 29). But Shemaiah, one of the exiles sends back a letter to the priest Zephaniah in Jerusalem in which he summarizes Jeremiah's letter and asks for Jeremiah to be punished and imprisoned.

by epigraphic finds in the Levant and particularly in Judea before the Exile. Thus, different ostraca offer references to prophecy though always in fragmentary context, as the ancient Hebrew ostracon number 88 from Arad ("strengthen your arm and […] the king of Egypt […]")[44] which could be the quotation of an oracle on the occasion of a royal intronization. More importantly two ostraca from Lakish make reference to a "prophet" (הנבא): ostracon n° 16 is very fragmentary ("…ya]hu the prophet," l.5') and ostracon n° 3 ("I am sending a letter confiscated by Tobyahu, the royal administrator. It was sent to Shallum son of Yada from the prophet, saying, 'Beware!' / Et quant à la lettre de Tobyahu, le serviteur du roi, adressée à Shillem fils de Yada de la part du prophète disant : « Prends garde », ton serviteur l'a envoyée à mon maître," l.19-21).[45] As these letters have been found in Lakish and because they are not addressed to the city, the hypothesis that they were copies or drafts have been proposed. It also appears from their content that they were written conjointly to letters on a soft medium, skin for instance, and that they serve as confirmation of good reception. In both cases, and for our purpose, what is interesting is the duplication of the media: a letter is sent on soft material, this sending is confirmed by that of an ostracon, and the whole process is attested by a second ostracon that remains in the administrative archives of the city. Writing as every judicial process requires at least two witnesses. Therefore, the strategy of authorization, and this is most important for our purpose, is not just a literary device, though it is highly symbolical and theological, it is based on the reality and contextualization of writing in ancient Judea and we may infer more broadly maybe in ancient Palestine.

3. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the media in biblical texts has shown the relative scarcity of occurrences and consequently the important and strategic function that were

[44] A. LEMAIRE, *Inscriptions hébraïques*, Paris: Cerf (LAPO 9), 1977, 220–221. See the restauration proposed by J. M. LINDENBERGER, *Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Letters*, Atlanta: SBL Press, 2003, 119, n° 52 ("I have become king in all [the land of Israel]. Be strong and […] the king of Egypt to […]"). The restauration proposed by N. NA'AMAN, "Literacy in the Negev in the Late Monarchical Period," in *Contextualizing Israel's Sacred Writings: Ancient Literacy, Orality, and Literary Production*, B. B. Schmidt (ed.), Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015, 51–52, is different ("I reigned over a[ll[?] that my heart[?] desired[?]]. Strengthen the arms and [… for] the king of Egypt did n[ot[?] come out[?] …]").

[45] J. M. LINDENBERGER, *Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Letters*, 113s, n[os] 62 et 65; A. LEMAIRE, "Ostraca and Incised Inscriptions," in *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994). Volume IV, The Iron Age and Post-Iron Age Pottery and Artefacts*, Tel Aviv: The Institute of Archaeology, 2004, 2099–2132; H. BARSTAD, "Lachish Ostracon III and Ancient Israelite Prophecy," in *Avraham Malamat Volume*, B. A. Levine, S. Aḥituv (eds), Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993, 8*–12*.

theirs when mentioned (Exod 24; 31; 32; 34; Deut 4; 5; 9; 10; 1 Kgs 8; Jer 36). On the one hand, the medium and its duplication serve the process of authentication of divine words as would different witnesses in the course of a trial and, on the other hand, they participate in the authorization of a text: a text as it is written down endures even though it may change, be augmented in various ways or even be utterly destroyed. This strategy of authentication and authorization, very much grounded in the social history and contextualization of ancient writing, thus appears to be nothing else but the very foundation of the concept of revelation, in the books of the Tora and in the book of Jeremiah. Indeed, the Akkadian expression from of old "keep my tablet for testimony (*šîbûtum*)" stands as the foundation stone of divine speech in these biblical texts!

Abstract
This contribution starts with a short review of prophetic witnesses in Mesopotamia and the Levant, it appears that prophecy may have one theoretical definition, yet with regard to media and materials used, it is modified and corrected. It thus shows that the question of the medium and material is essential to the definition of prophecy and that according to its function, the statute of divine speech does change, from punctual to perpetual, and from secrecy to public acknowledgment. It is the aim of this paper to address the question of the relation between the prophetic word and its medium in biblical texts so as to understand better what the function of prophecy is. Two instances are analyzed, the book of the law as divine speech revealed to Moses the prophet in relation with the tables, and prophetic books in relation with the scrolls when these are textually referred to. This contribution brings to light the importance of written media in biblical texts to confer authority to divine speech. In a particular way, the motif of duplication is shown to be a highly literary as well as theological strategy, yet imbedded in ancient practices of writing, to confirm and authorize divine speech as it is written. Thus the very foundations of the concept of revelation are laid open.

LANGUAGE OF GODS, PYTHIAN APOLLO AND PLATO'S *CRATYLUS*

Claire Le Feuvre*

A recurring element in the poetic tradition of different Indo-European languages is what is known as "language of gods." Gods are able to communicate with men in human language, but they are supposed to have a special language of their own.[1]

1. HOMERIC AND HESIODIC INSTANCES

That can be exemplified with the following examples from Homer:

Ex. 1. *Iliad* 20.73-74: "and against Hephaistos stood the great deep-eddying river, who is called Xanthos by the gods, but by mortals Scamandros"[2] (Lattimore's translation).

Ex. 2. *Iliad* 1.403-404: the creature with a hundred arms, "that creature the gods name *Briareus*, but all men *Aigaiôn*"[3] (Lattimore's translation).

The divine name may be used without the mention "gods call it thus," for instance Xanthos is used 15 times in the *Iliad* without the label "divine," as many times as the human name Scamandros. The poet in the narration uses both Xanthos and Scamandros; so do heroes in discourse (Sarpedon uses Xanthos in *Il*. 12.313, 5.479, Achilles uses Scamandros in Il. 21.124); gods use apparently only Xanthos (Hera in *Il*. 21.332 and 337). And for the pair in ex. 2, Hesiod, a didactic poet of the 8th c. BCE, has no instance of the name Aigaiôn but only the name Briareus, which he never explicitly gives as a divine name. The same opposition can be found for common nouns:

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[1] The first part of this paper summarises well-known facts and has no claim to original conclusions. I thank L. Leidwanger and B. Rouchon for their suggestions.

[2] *Il*. 20.73-74: ἄντα δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ Ἡφαίστοιο μέγας ποταμὸς βαθυδίνης
ὃν Ξάνθον καλέουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δὲ Σκάμανδρον.
T. W. ALLEN, *Homeri opera*, vol. 1-2, 3rd ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920. Trans. R. LATTIMORE, *The Iliad of Homer*, introduction and notes by R. Martin, Chicago: University Press, 2001. A phonetic figure indexes the relationship between both names, which have a symmetrical initial sequence [ksaN]/[skaN] (N = any nasal consonant), and are related to the language to which they belong through their final part Skamandron/andres "men," Xanthos/theoi "gods;" see C. WATKINS, *How to Kill a Dragon. Aspects of Indo-European Poetics*, Oxford University Press, 1995: 183.

[3] *Il*. 1.402-404: ὦχ᾽ ἑκατόγχειρον καλέσασ᾽ ἐς μακρὸν Ὄλυμπον
ὃν Βριάρεων καλέουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δέ τε πάντες
Αἰγαίων᾽,

Ex. 3. *Iliad* 14.291: "in the likeness of a singing bird whom in the mountains the immortal gods call *khalkis*, but men call him *kymindis*"[4] (Lattimore's translation).

As for the former instances, both the human name and the divine one are a linguistic unit, that is, one word. This is not always the case: the human name may consist of one word and the divine name be a periphrasis:

Ex. 4. *Iliad* 2.813-814: "there is before the city a steep hill in the plain […], which men call the Hill of the Thicket (*Batieia*), but the immortal gods have named it the 'burial mound of dancing Myrina'"[5] (Lattimore's translation).

It is striking that in archaic epic poetry, language of gods appears mostly as a linguistic precision given by the poet and not in divine speech: when gods speak to men, they use the language of men. Hera uses Xanthos, the divine name, twice, when she talks to another god, Hephaistos.

Ex. 1 to 3 have another common point: the human name is opaque, that is, one cannot explain why the object or the person bears this name. On the contrary, the divine name is clear and meaningful, and one understands immediately why the object or the person is so named.[6] For ex. 1, *Xanthos* in Greek means "yellow," whereas *Scamandros* is an unanalysable hydronym. The divine name of the river *Xanthos* reflects the physical reality, the waters are yellowish because they are rich in alluvium. It is a descriptive epithet turned into a proper name. Similarly, for ex. 2 *Aigaiôn*, the human name, is opaque, save for the fact that it is derived from that of the Egean sea *Aigaios pontos*, itself unmotivated; a tradition gives also *Aigaiôn* as an epithet of Poseidon, the sea-god (Hesychius, *Lexicon*, alpha 1688). The divine name on the other hand, *Briareus*, is immediately understandable as "the mighty one," derived from the adjective *briaros* "strong." In ex. 3 the bird's human name *kumindis* is opaque, the divine name *khalkis* designates it as the bronze bird, being a derivative of *khalkos* "bronze," and may refer to the colour of the bird, otherwise unknown.[7]

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[4] *Il*. 14.290-291: ὄρνιθι λιγυρῇ ἐναλίγκιος, ἥν τ᾽ ἐν ὄρεσσι
χαλκίδα κικλήσκουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δὲ κύμινδιν

[5] *Il*. 2.811-813: Ἔστι δέ τις προπάροιθε πόλιος αἰπεῖα κολώνη
[…]
τὴν ἤτοι ἄνδρες Βατίειαν κικλήσκουσιν,
ἀθάνατοι δέ τε σῆμα πολυσκάρθμοιο Μυρίνης.

[6] This had already been noticed by H. GÜNTERT, *Von der Sprache der Götter und Geister. Bedeutungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur homerischen und eddischen Göttersprache*, Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1921: 104–116. See also A. LÓPEZ EIRE, "Rhetoric and language," in *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, I. Worthington (ed.), Malden–Oxford: Blackwell, 2010: 339

[7] A papyrus of Dio of Prusa (Dio Chrysostom) has mistakenly the reverse: οἷον ὅτι τὴν χαλκίδα κύμινδιν οἱ θεοὶ καλοῦσι "as the fact that gods call the *khalkis kumindis*" (*Oratio* 11.22b); that may be a misplacement of the article not by the author but by a copyist, but it shows at any rate that neither word was known as a bird name by the copyist. All the attempts of ancient lexicogra-

The divine name alone can be mentioned:

Ex. 5. *Odyssey* 12.61: "blessed gods call them *Planktes*."[8]

Planktes, literally "wandering (rocks)," is the motivated divine name of the Symplegades rocks "clashing rocks." The human name is not mentioned and the audience is supposed to be able to supply it. A different case is the name of a magical herb that grows on Circe's island, *môlu*:

Ex. 6. *Odyssey* 10.304-306: "its root was black, and its flower looking like milk. Gods call it *môlu*; it is difficult to extract for mortal men, but gods have all powers."[9]

Môlu is given as a divine name. There is no human counterpart because this is a magical herb found on a mythical island in the realm of a magician goddess: before coming there, no mortal has ever seen this herb, so that there is no human name for it.[10] The countless attempts to identify the *môlu* with a real herb, from Antiquity down to modern times, do not yield any convincing result because there is no such herb in the natural world. Within Greek, *môlu* can be integrated into the series *môluô* "to weaken" (Galen), *môlunomai* "to become weak" (Hippocrates),[11] *môlus* "weakened, exhausted" (Nicander, 3rd c. BCE), and is a motivated formation.[12] The effect of the *môlu* is to weaken the effects of Circe's drugs, we are dealing with a medical context, be it a magical one, and the name means "weakening" with active meaning, whereas *môlus* has a passive meaning. I shall come back to ex. 4 later on.

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phers to identify the bird are mere guesses which do not rely on anything solid, and they should not be taken for more than what they are.

[8] *Od.* 12.61: Πλαγκτὰς δή τοι τάς γε θεοὶ μάκαρες καλέουσι

[9] *Od.* 10.304-306: ῥίζῃ μὲν μέλαν ἔσκε, γάλακτι δὲ εἴκελον ἄνθος·
μῶλυ δέ μιν καλέουσι θεοί, χαλεπὸν δέ τ᾽ ὀρύσσειν
ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι· θεοὶ δέ τε πάντα δύνανται.
T. W. ALLEN, *Homeri opera*, vol. 3, 2nd ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917.

[10] The opposition gods *vs* men is present in the text, but, since it cannot be conveyed by language in the absence of any human name, it is transferred to the ability of getting hold of the *môlu*.

[11] The verb is especially used for the decrease of symptoms: fever (Hippocrates, *De Morbis popularibus* 7.1. 43 and 59), oedema (Hippocrates, *De Morbis popularibus* 2.2.6).

[12] C. DE LAMBERTERIE, "Grec homérique μῶλυ: étymologie et poétique," *Lalies* 6 (1984): 129–138, and *Les adjectifs grecs en -υς, sémantique et comparaison*, Louvain: Peeters, 1990: 375–390, considers that *môlu* is a very old form, substantivised neuter of the adjective *môlus*, which he derives from root **mel(h₂)*- "to grind," and also understands "the weakener." After him, F. BADER, *La langue des dieux, ou l'hermétisme des poètes indo-européens*, Pisa: Giardini, 1989, 209–210, sees in *môlu* a derivative from "to grind, to mill." I am not convinced of the antiquity of the form, and would favour, after H. FRISK, *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg: Winter, 1960–1972, and P. CHANTRAINE, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots*, 3rd ed., Paris: Klincksieck, 2009, the hypothesis of a back-formation after the verb, which is the only form attested in prose. However, there is no doubt that *môlu* is motivated.

Sometimes the pair human name/divine name shows the opposite relationship: the divine name is opaque whereas the human name is clear. An example in point is from the fragments attributed to Hesiod:

> **Ex. 7.** Hesiod, *fr*. 296 M-W, 1-3: "in the divine island of Abantis, which eternal gods used to call *Abantis*, but Zeus named it *Euboia*, after the cow"[13] (that is, Io).[14]

The human name of the island Euboea, which means literally "rich in cows," is descriptive and motivated, whereas the divine name *Abantis*, lit. "land of the Abantes" is motivated only for who knows his mythology. This paradox is solved in the following way: the human name is said to have been bestowed by a god, Zeus himself, so that it can be considered both a case of renewal of a name in the language of gods and an instance of transmission of the new divine name to human language.

The opposition between language of gods and language of men was exploited by comic poets, as when the 5th c. BCE poet Cratinus explains that the gods call Zeus "head-gatherer" (*kephalēgeretan*), a play on the Homeric epithet "cloud-gatherer" (*nephelēgereta*).[15] Similarly, the 5th c. BCE comic poet Sannyrion has a god say "we gods call 'round cake' what you mortals call piously 'flour.'"[16] This shows that the language of gods was not an esoteric notion, but something familiar to the Athenian audience.

In the Greek tradition, it is attested mainly for proper names: Homer has only one instance for a common noun, that of the bird *kumindis*/*khalkis*, but other cases are attested outside the epic corpus – comic poets put aside. Thus, Pherecydes of Athens (5th c. BCE) reports that "the gods call the table 'keeper of the sacrifice' (*thuōros*)."[17] The word *thuōros* is attested in a fragment from Antimachus (5th c. BCE, *fr*. 69), it is used by Callimachus (3rd c. BCE, *Hymn to Diana* 134) who does not label it "language of gods," and transmitted also by Hesychius (*Lexicon*, theta 988), who glosses the word "the table which keeps the offerings" and the *Suda* (theta 597), which reads "it is properly the sacred

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[13] Hesiod, *fr*. 296: […] νήσωι ἐν Ἀβαντίδι δίῃ·
τὴν πρὶν Ἀβαντίδα κίκλησκον θεοὶ αἰὲν ἐόντες,
Εὔβοιαν δὲ βοός μιν ἐπώνυμον ὠνόμασε Ζεύς.
R. MERKELBACH, M. L. WEST, *Fragmenta hesiodea*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.

[14] Ancient lexicographers understand it as "the beautiful cow," referring to Io, who was supposedly the eponymous mythological figure of the island. In linguistic terms, it is a possessive compound meaning "with good cows/oxen," but ancient lexicographers pay no attention to the structure of a compound.

[15] Cratinus, *fr*. 258 *PCG*, μέγιστον τίκτετον τύραννον, | ὃν δὴ κεφαληγερέταν θεοὶ καλοῦσιν. R. KASSEL, C. AUSTIN, *Poetæ Comici Græci*, vol. 4, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1983.

[16] Sannyrion, *Gelôs*, *fr*. 1 *PCG*, πέλανον καλοῦμεν ἡμεῖς οἱ θεοί ἃ καλεῖτε σεμνῶς ἄλφιθ' ὑμεῖς οἱ βροτοί. R. KASSEL, C. AUSTIN, *Poetæ Comici Græci*, vol. 7, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989.

[17] Pherecydes, *fr*. 1, ἔλεγε τε ὅτι οἱ θεοὶ τὴν τράπεζαν θυωρὸν καλοῦσιν. H. DIELS, W. KRANZ, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, vol. 1, 6th ed., Berlin: Weidmann, 1951: 43–46.

table" and also mentions Pherecydes' attribution to the language of gods.[18] And in a fragment transmitted by Athenaeus, the poet Philoxenus of Cythera (5th-4th c. BCE) tells us that gods call "Amaltheia's horn" what humans call "the second table."[19]

2. Other Indo-European languages

The same principle is found in other Indo-European traditions, for instance in Sanskrit:

> **Ex. 8.** *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* 1.1.4.4: "then he took the black hide: 'you are a shield (*śarman*-)', said he, the word is 'skin' (*carman*-), that of the black one; that name of its is the human name, *śarman*- is the name given by gods."[20]

The human name *cárman*- and the divine name *śarman*- differ only by their initial consonant, which underlines the dimension of wordplay: the divine name is derived from the human one through a minor modification.

The human name of the shield is *cárman*- "hide," etymologically "cut piece of leather," but the noun is no longer analysable as such because the root *car*- "to cut" does not exist any more in Sanskrit. Thus, the word is isolated, not linked to other words of the same family, it is unmotivated in synchrony. The divine name *śarman*- is from root *śar*- < PIE **k̂el*- "to cover," a root which has also been lost in Sanskrit, but it is still linked in synchrony with other derivatives of the same root, *śaraṇa*- "protecting," *upāśara*- "refuge, protection:" therefore it is motivated, it belongs to a coherent group. The modification of the initial consonant turns the unmotivated human name into a meaningful divine name. Moreover, the human name *cárman*- "hide" refers to the material reality, since shields were made of leather stretched on a wooden armature, but *cárman*- can also apply to other leather objects; *śarman*- "protection" refers to the function of the shield; the divine name is more abstract than the human one, and so to speak more precise because it refers to its function, which is more essential than the material form. It reveals the true nature of the shield,

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[18] Hesychius, *Lexicon*, theta 988: θυωρόν· τράπεζαν τὴν τὰ θύη φυλάσσουσαν. K. Latte, *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon*, vol. 2, Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1966. *Suda*, theta 597: κυρίως ἡ ἱερὰ τράπεζα. ἔλεγε Φερεκύδης, ὅτι οἱ θεοὶ τὴν τράπεζαν θυωρὸν καλοῦσιν. A. Adler, *Suidae lexicon,* Leipzig: Teubner, 1928–1935.

[19] Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 14, 50: (tables) τὰς ἐφήμεροι καλέοντι [νῦν] τραπέζας ‹δευτέρας›, | ἀθάνατοι δέ τ᾽ Ἀμαλθείας κέρας. G. Kaibel, *Athenaei Naucratitae Deipnosophistarum libri xv*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1897–1890.

[20] Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa 1.1.4.4: *atha kṛṣṇājinam ādatte śarmāsīti, carma vāk tat kṛṣṇasya: tad asya tan mānuṣāṃ, śarma devattā.* A. Weber, *The Çatapatha-Brâhmaṇa in the Mâdhyandina-Çâkhâ with extracts from the commentaries of Sâyana, Harisvâmin and Dvivedânga*, Berlin 1849 (repr. Benares 1964).

which is to protect. In another place of the same text we read four names for the same animal, the horse:

> **Ex. 9.** *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* 10.4.6.1: "as the spurred one (*haya*-), he drove the gods, as the fast one (*vājin*-), the gandharvas, as the runner (*arvant*-), the asuras,[21] and as horse (*áśva*-), the men."[22]

As C. Watkins puts it, there is a basic opposition between a neutral term (the "human" name) and a marked one (the "divine" names),[23] and the marked terms are metaphoric denominations. Men call the horse *aśva*-, cognate with Lat. *equus*, Gr. *hippos*, which is unmotivated in synchrony. Opposed to it are several divine names of the horse, all of which are motivated in synchrony. The first name, *háya*-, is from root *hi*- "to push forward," often used with "horse" as an object; it is found in the compound *aśva-hayá*- "pushing horses forward," the two elements of which frame this enumeration.

This text also shows that, out of the basic opposition, there developed a further differentiation between four names, according to the category of divine creatures concerned. This differentiation is also found in Avestan, an ancient Iranian language in which were written down the religious texts of Zoroastrianism, it gave rise to the distinction between *Ahuric* language (that of the god Ahura Mazda and his followers) and *Daevic* language (the language of the *daevas*, the demons). Here again, Ahuric nouns are as a rule motivated, metaphoric or periphrastic, whereas their Daevic counterparts are the old inherited nouns: the Daevic name of the "eye" is *aši*- (etymologically identical with Sanskrit *ákṣi*-), paired with Ahuric *dōiθra*-, lit. "seer," from root *dā(y)*- "to see;" Daevic *karəna*- "ear" (etymologically identical with Sanskrit *kárṇa*-) is paired with Ahuric *gaoša*-, lit. "hearer," from root *gaoš*- "to hear;" Daevic *diiau*- "heaven" (etymologically identical with Sanskrit *dyaus*) with Ahuric *asman*-, which continues an old inherited metaphor of the heaven as a stone vault (Sancrite *áśman*- "stone").[24] This has a parallel in Old Icelandic, where we see a subdivision between gods, superior gods (called Ases) and inferior

[21] Asuras and gandharvas are divine beings of lower status.

[22] *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* 10.4.6.1: *háyo bhutvā́ devā́n avahad vājī́ gandharvā́n árvā ásurān áśvo manuṣyā́n*. A. PINCHARD, *Les langues de sagesse dans la Grèce et l'Inde anciennes*, Genève: Droz, 2009: 136, translates "Se déployant en tant que l'*Aiguillonné* (*haya*-), il est la monture des dieux, en tant que *Gagnant du prix* (*vājin*-) il est la monture des Gandharva, en tant que *Coursier* (*árvan*-) celle des démons, en tant que cheval (*áśva*-) il est la monture des hommes."

[23] C. WATKINS, "Language of Gods and Language of Men. Remarks on some Indo-European Metalinguistic Traditions," in *Myth and Law among the Indo-Europeans*, J. Puhvel (ed.), Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970, 457.

[24] J. KELLENS, "Avestique," in *Compendium Linguarum Iranicarum*, R. Schmitt (ed.), Wiesbaden: L. Reichert, 1989: 54.

gods (called Vanes), giants and elves, to which can be added the dwarves, each of them having their special names for a given reality.

Ex. 10. *Poetic Edda. Alvíssmál* 14 (balad of Alvis, a dwarf):
"'Moon' with men, 'Luminary' | the gods among,
'The Wheel' in the house of hell;
'The Goer' the giants, | 'The Gleamer' the dwarfs,
The elves 'The Teller of Time'."[25]

Each strophe of the poem thus enumerates the different names given by all these races to a given thing (earth, heaven, moon, sun, clouds, wind, calm, sea, fire, forest, night, seed, beer). This further subdivision is probably an independent development in Indian and Germanic poetic traditions. However, the principle that there can be several non-human names is probably inherited and is also found in Greek (see below, 5.). In the *Alvíssmál*, the kernel remains the opposition between language of men and language of gods, and this makes the first line of each strophe.

The strophe in ex. 10 gives first the human name, opaque (moon), then the divine one, metaphoric and clear (luminary), followed by three other metaphoric denominations (wheel, goer, gleamer) and a kenning (see below, 4.) under the form of a compound *ártala* "teller of time." The choice is conditioned by the alliterating principle of Old Icelandic versification, based on alliteration of stressed syllables in the same line, which limits the range of possible synonyms. But the principle remains that next to the human name, unmotivated, stand several other names, which allude to the nature of the thing thus named, being either descriptive (the wheel, the Goer) or functional (the luminary, the teller of time). In the *Alvíssmál*, the name in the language of gods is not always motivated,[26] but in many cases it is a speaking metaphor, as for the moon, which gods call *mylin* "luminary," alliterating with the human name *máni* "moon," for the wind, which gods call *vafur* "waverer," alliterating with

[25] *Edda*, *Alvíssmál* 14: Máni heitir með mǫnnom, enn mylinn með goðom,
kalla hverfanda hvél helio í,
scyndi iotnar, enn sein dvergar,
kalla álfar ártala.
G. NECKEL, *Edda, Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, 5th ed. revised, Heidelberg: Winter, 1983; transl. H. A. BELLOWS, *The poetic Edda, translated from Icelandic with an introduction and notes*, Princeton University Press, 1936.

[26] For instance, the sun is named *sól* by men, and *sunna* by gods: these are the two outcomes of the old *r/n stem *sh_2u-*l*-/*sh_2u-*n*- inherited from Proto-Indo-European. Old Icelandic generalised the *l*-stem, and the *n*-stem (found in Engl. *sun*, Germ. *Sonne*) was thereby limited, as an old-fashioned word, to poetic use. Similarly for "fire," the divine name is the old *funi*, cognate with Engl. *fire* and Germ. *Feuer*, and inherited from Proto-Indo-European, but unknown in Scandinavian except as a poetic word. In both cases the divine name is unmotivated but is an archaic word, that is, a marked one, as C. WATKINS, "Language of Gods and Language of Men. Remarks on some Indo-European Metalinguistic Traditions:" 457, formulates it.

vindr "wind," or for the night, which gods call *njól* "obscurity," alliterating with *nótt* "night." In one case the name in the language of gods is a metaphor inherited from Proto-Indo-European: the earth is called by gods *fold* "field." The word is rare in Old Icelandic prose, but frequent in poetry with the meaning "earth." *Fold* is an old substantivised adjective meaning literally "the broad one," which is cognate with Sanskrit *Pṛthivī* "the broad one, the earth" (Proto-Indo-European **pl̥th₂-u-*) and found with a lexical renewal in Greek *eureia khthôn* "the broad earth:"[27] what was already a poetic denomination for the earth in the proto-language was preserved as the name in the language of gods in Old Icelandic, whereas it became an ordinary, unmarked, non-poetic word in other branches of Germanic (Engl. *field*, Germ. *Feld*). Periphrastic denominations or compounds, called kennings (see 4.) are mostly found in the names given by the other four races (vanes, giants, elves, dwarfs), but in a few cases the name in the language of gods is itself a kenning, as in *vallar-fax* "the field's mane," for the forest, *viðr* in the language of men, with an alliteration in [v]/[f] binding the two names.

To sum up, the difference between language of men and language of gods is that the latter uses meaningful names, which reflect the nature of the referent, when the former has opaque ones. That is, divine language is perfect because there is a logical relationship between form (the name) and meaning, whereas in human language there is none.

It must be underlined that the opposition language of gods *vs* language of men does not deal with verbs or adjectives or any other parts of speech, but only with nouns, both common nouns and proper names. In Sanskrit, in Germanic, or in Greek, gods speak the same language as humans, they use the same grammar and the same lexicon, but they name things and people differently. The question is not "how do you say X in the language of gods?" but "how do you call X in the language of gods?" In divine language, the horse is called "the fast one" (ex. 9), the muddy Scamander "the yellow one" (ex. 1): "fast" and "yellow" are plain adjectives, neither divine nor human because there is no such opposition for adjectives, but they become divine when, substantivised, they are used as names. In Avestan the opposition between Ahuric and Daevic languages was extended to include verbs but verbs are not synonyms: for instance, the demons do not "eat," they "devour,"[28] but this is different from calling one thing by two different names.

[27] R. SCHMITT, *Dichtung und Dichtersprache in indogermanischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1967: 181–183.
[28] J. KELLENS, "Avestique:" 54 (see full reference above, fn. 24).

3. LANGUAGE OF GODS AND LANGUAGE OF POETS

Of course the language of gods is the language of poets. Both metaphoric denominations like "the fast one" (ex. 9) and periphrastic denominations like "the teller of time" (ex. 10) are common poetic devices: the so-called language of gods is a stylistically marked form of human language, using the language of men in a creative way – *creative* being the translation of Greek *poiètikos*, poetic. This is explicit in Sanskrit: only poets and seers know the language of gods, ordinary humans do not, and this language is characterised by the use of different names, sometimes several ones. This is stated for instance in the RigVeda:

Ex. 11. *RigVeda* 7.87.4: "Varuna told me, the seer: 'three times seven *names* (emphasis mine) bears the cow; he who knows the *pada* (the poetic line), let him speak them as secrets, if he wishes to serve as a poet for the next generation.'"[29]

Similarly Greek poets tell humans what the divine name is, they are willing to share with men a small part of this knowledge they share with gods. Poets could create as many divine names as they wanted to. Testimony is Plato, who coins a fanciful divine name for Eros, the god of love and desire:

Ex. 12. Plato, *Phaedrus* 252b: "but some of the Homeridae, I believe, repeat two verses on Love from the spurious poems of Homer, one of which is very outrageous and not perfectly metrical. They sing them as follows:
Mortals call him winged Eros (*Erôta potênon*),
But the immortals call him Pterôs (*Pterôta*), because he must needs grow wings [*pteron*].
You may believe this or not."[30] (transl. Fowler).

The alleged divine name *Pterôs* is a portmanteau word blending *pteron* "wing" and *erôs* "love." Plato attributes those two lines to the epic poets, underlining however that they are spurious and that the second one is metrically faulty, and adding right after the quotation "you may believe this or not:" this serves as a signal that the lines are a creation by Plato himself. The philosopher, like the poet, knows the real name of things, the divine name, and can reveal it to humans, or rather, he can create it. Here the divine name is a modi-

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[29] *RigVeda* 7.87.4: *uvā́ca me váruṇo médhirāya tríḥ saptá nā́mā́ghnyā bibharti*
vidvā́n padásya gúhyā ná vocad yugā́ya vípra úparāya śikṣan.
T. AUFRECHT, *Die Hymnen des Rigveda* (4th ed.), Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1968.

[30] Plato, *Phaedrus* 252b4-252c1: λέγουσι δὲ οἶμαί τινες Ὁμηριδῶν ἐκ τῶν ἀποθέτων ἐπῶν δύο ἔπη εἰς τὸν Ἔρωτα, ὧν τὸ ἕτερον ὑβριστικὸν πάνυ καὶ οὐ σφόδρα τι ἔμμετρον· ὑμνοῦσι δὲ ὧδε – τὸν δ᾽ ἤτοι θνητοὶ μὲν Ἔρωτα καλοῦσι ποτηνόν, ἀθάνατοι δὲ Πτέρωτα, διὰ πτεροφύτορ᾽ ἀνάγκην. τούτοις δὴ ἔξεστι μὲν πείθεσθαι, ἔξεστιν δὲ μή. J. BURNET, *Platonis opera*, vol. 2, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1901. Transl. H. N. FOWLER, *Platonis Opera*, vol. 1, Cambridge: Harvard University Press (Loeb Classical Library), 1966 (repr.).

fication of the human name, which is parallel to the Indian example of the word for "shield," *cárman-* modified into *śárman-*. But whereas in the latter case the modification yields a transparent word which does exist in Sanskrite, Plato's creation is a monster which drives wordplay to its limits. *Pterôs* is both obscure, because it is a word which does not exist in Greek, although it is understandable because it is very close to *pterôtos* "winged" (which is a real Greek word), and at the same time it is more meaningful than the human name, being meant to reveal the true nature of Eros which the human name does not make clear, as *śárman-* reveals the nature of the shield.

The poetic character of the divine name is underlined by the phonetic figure which binds it with the human name. In Sanskrit, the divine name of ex. 8 (*śárman-*) forms with the human name *cárman-* a minimal pair with only one varying phoneme. In ex. 9, *vājin-* and *arvant-* alliterate with the human name *áśva-* "horse" through their common syllable [vă]. In Greek too, several instances follow this principle: the *Xanthos* of ex. 1 alliterates with the human name *Scamandros* ([ksaN]/[skaN], see footnote 2), the *Planktes* of ex. 5 alliterate with the (absent) human name *Symplēgades* ([pl-K-T], with K standing for any velar stop and T for any dental stop), to a certain extent the *khalkis* of ex. 3, under the form of the accusative *khalkida*, alliterates with the human name *kumindis* ([kid]/[k-i-di]), Philoxenos' *Amaltheias keras* "Amaltheia's horn" also alliterates with the accusative *trapezas deuteras* "second table." And in Old Icelandic the divine name always alliterates with the human one: in synchrony, it is of course a consequence of the basic principle of versification in that language, but since the device of a phonetic figure between human and divine names is also found in other Indo-European traditions (Indian and Greek), it is likely that it is an inherited element, which found its place most easily in the Old Icelandic system.

4. KENNINGAR

Next to metaphoric denominations, poets also use periphrases, or compounds for languages keen on compounding such as Sanskrit, Greek or Germanic: in the Old Icelandic *Alvíssmál*, the name for "sky" in the language of the vanes (inferior gods) is the compound "weaver of winds" (*vindófni*), an elaborate formulation relying on a metaphoric use of "to weave," the object "the winds" being the only link with the notion thus named, the sky. The name of the forest in the language of gods, *vallar-fax* "the field's mane," is a periphrasis relying on a metaphoric use of "mane." This became a typical feature of Old Icelandic learned poetry, called kenning, pl. kenningar – the latter word is a derivative of the verb "to know," compare German *kennen*. The kenningar are aenigmatic periphrases or compounds used by poets to display their art of concealing

meaning under unexpected garments. There may be several periphrases for the same thing. Another kenning for "sky" is "Ymir's skull," which is a mythological allusion: the visible world was said to have been created out of the dismembered limbs of a giant, Ymir, whose skull became the sky. Similarly, the ship can be named "sea-steed" or "wave-swine," among other kenningar.

Vedic as well as classical Sanskrit texts are full of kenningar. In Greek, the compound *thuōros* "keeper of the sacrifice" transmitted by Pherecydes is a kenning for "(sacred) table;" another one is the syntagm "Amaltheia's horn" in Philoxenus of Cythera. In Homer, the "burial mound of dancing Myrina" of ex. 4 is a kenning: the human name *Batieia* is clear enough, it is a descriptive epithet derived from the word *batia* "thicket;" the divine name, a periphrasis, substitutes a mythological motivation to a linguistic one, saying something about the *raison d'être* of the hill, which is that it is a funerary tumulus.[31] The "burial mound of dancing Myrina" is semantically transparent up to a point only, that is, if the audience identifies the mythological allusion and knows who is this Myrina (supposedly a queen of Amazons). For people knowing the myth, the periphrasis is clear; for those who do not know the myth, because they are foreigners if it is a local myth, or because the myth is an old one which was forgotten to a large extent, the periphrasis is both clear (it is the tomb of a woman or heroin) and obscure (who was she?). Poets developed of course this connivance relying on a shared knowledge with the audience, or part of the audience. This is manifest when the poet gives only the divine name, leaving it to the audience to supply the missing element of the pair. By so doing poets created new periphrases or metaphoric expressions which were not immediately clear, but became so only through mobilisation on the part of the audience of a mythological, historical, geographical, astronomical, proverbial knowledge which everyone did not have at their disposal.

This is expressed by Pseudo-Plato (*Second Alcibiades* 147b7-9): "because he (Homer) speaks through aenigmas, he and almost all other poets; for by nature all poetry is aenigmatic, and not everyone can understand it."[32]

5. PINDAR AND THE ELABORATION OF THE TECHNIQUE

An example of such a learned poet in Greece is Pindar, a lyric poet of the 5th c. BCE, who also uses the traditional distinction between language of men and

[31] Plato, *Cratylus* 392a, calls it simply *Murine*, thus losing the motivation of the toponym since the word *sēma* "burial mound" is dropped.

[32] Plato, *Alcibiades ii* 147b7-9: ἀλλ' αἰνίττεται, ὦ βέλτιστε, καὶ οὗτος καὶ ἄλλοι δὲ ποιηταὶ σχεδόν τι πάντες. Ἔστιν τε γὰρ φύσει ποιητικὴ ἡ σύμπασα αἰνιγματώδης καὶ οὐ τοῦ προστυχόντος ἀνδρὸς γνωρίσαι. J. BURNET, *Platonis opera*, vol. 2, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901.

language of gods. A fragment of Partheneion (a choral song executed by young girls) has the following:

Ex. 13. Pindar, *fr*. 96.1-3: "O blessed one, whom Olympian gods call the multiple hound (*pantodapon kuna*) of the Great Mother."[33]

This is a kenning for Pan. The fact that only a fragment is transmitted does not allow to know whether the human name, missing, was explicitly contrasted with the divine one. As was the case for Briareus/Aigaiôn, gods' names themselves (here Pan) are included into this dichotomy of double naming. This example can be contrasted with the Homeric hymn to the same deity, *H.Pan* 47 "‹the gods› named him Pan (*Pān*), for he charmed the mind of all (*pâsi*),"[34] with a folk etymology of a Cratylic type between the theonym and the adjective "all" (Nom.sg neuter *pān*):[35] Pan is the human name, under which men worship the god, but it is in fact a divine name, motivated, bestowed by the gods themselves, as is the case for Euboia in the Hesiodic fragment. Pindar alludes to this explanation of the theonym Pan through the epithet "all-appearance" (*pantodapon*) of the "hound of the Great Mother." While the Homeric and Hesiodic instances were simple, Pindar's technique is more elaborate, the periphrastic name (kenning) encapsulating itself a metaphoric equivalent of the human name (*panto-dapon*/*Pan*). The etymological figure binds the name used by gods and the one used by men. A particularly interesting example are the divine names of Delos in Pindar.

Ex. 14. Pindar, *Hymn* 1, *fr*. 33c, 4-6: "Hail, o god-built, most desirable branch for the children of Leto of the gleaming hair, daughter of the sea, unmovable miracle of the wide earth, whom mortals call Dālos, and the gods in Olympus call the far shining star of the dark blue earth (*tēlephanton kuaneas khthonos astron*)."[36]

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[33] Pindar, *fr*. 96: ὦ μάκαρ, ὅν τε μεγάλας
θεοῦ κύνα παντοδαπόν
καλέοισιν Ὀλύμπιοι.
H. MAEHLER, *Pindari carmina cum fragmentis*, 4th ed., Leipzig: Teubner, 1975.
This fragment is also discussed by F. BADER, "Autobiographie et héritage dans la langue des dieux: d'Homère à Hésiode et Pindare," *Revue des Etudes Grecques* 103 (1990): 383–408.

[34] *Hymn to Pan* 47: Πᾶνα δέ μιν καλέεσκον ὅτι φρένα πᾶσιν ἔτερψε.

[35] As *Pān* results from a contraction of *Pa(w)on*-, preserved in Arcadian, this folk etymology, starting from the contracted form, cannot be old: the Homeric Hymn to Pan is a recent one, usually thought to have been composed in the 5th c. BCE, that is, more or less at the same time as Pindar's poems. The etymology *Pan*/*pan* is also quoted by Plato, *Cratylus* 408c.

[36] Pindar, *fr*. 33c, 4-6: χαῖρ', ὦ θεοδμάτα, λιπαροπλοκάμου
παίδεσσι Λατοῦς ἱμεροέστατον ἔρνος,
πόντου θύγατερ, χθονὸς εὐρεί-
ας ἀκίνητον τέρας, ἅν τε βροτοί
Δᾶλον κικλήσκοισιν, μάκαρες δ' ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ
τηλέφαντον κυανέας χθονὸς ἄστρον.

This example follows the Homeric pattern, the divine name is uttered by the poet and does not appear in the discourse of a god. The human name, Delos, is the name by which everyone knows the island where Leto gave birth to Apollo and Artemis. *Dālos* is the regular form in the Doric dialect of Greek, which is the conventional language of choral lyric poetry. It is a speaking name meaning "visible, clear," and the adjective *dālos*/*dēlos* is commonplace in all Greek dialects. On the other hand, the divine name is a periphrasis consisting of four words, all ordinary words of the human language, the compound *tēlephanton* excepted, and this periphrasis can be understood only by those who know their mythology. The first word *tēlephanton* "visible from afar," a compound, can be considered a kenning for Delos, being more or less synonymous with the adjective *dēlos* "clear." Thus, the kenning - periphrasis used in the divine name includes a kenning of the mortal name – there was no such thing in the Homeric examples we saw above, the human name and the divine one had no relationship with each other, except that they refer to the same reality and that they may be linked by a phonetic figure. Here too there may be a hidden phonetic figure: in the Ionic dialect of epic poetry, *tēlephanton* shares its initial phonetic sequence [Tēl] with *Dēlos* (T stands for any dental stop). In Pindar's poem, the Doric form *Dālos* hides this phonetic figure. Pindar may be reworking here a phrase *tēlephantos Dēlos* borrowed from an epic poet.

But Pindar does not stop here. This adjective *tēlephanton* qualifies the word "star" – and of course an island is not a star. This is a mythological kenning: Delos used to be the daughter of a Titan, and her real name was Asteria "the starry one," related to *astron* "star." Confronted with the love of Zeus, she dived into the sea to escape his amorous advances, and was transformed into an island, which since then bears the name Delos – at least according to one account (Callimachus, *Hymn to Delos* 36-40), because as often, there are several versions of the myth. And of course a star is by essence "visible from afar." The full name *tēlephanton astron* "the star visible from afar" thus combines the former name of the island, when she was still a goddess (Asteria, to be deduced from *astron*), and the new one (Delos), which appears to be a hidden continuation, not of the former name Asteria itself, but of its epithet *tēlephanton*. Hidden, although the adjective *dēlos* means "visible," is paradoxical, but what Pindar is doing is making clear the hidden link between the two names, the second of which, Asteria, is not explicitly mentioned and remains itself concealed under *astron*. Thus, the name in the language of gods is both obscure because it needs to be decoded and in a way more exact because it encapsulates the truth of the myth of Delos/Asteria.

The poet also underlines the metamorphosis of Asteria through the adjacency of *astron* "star" and *khthonos* "earth," which it follows immediately in the Greek text: a star is meant to be in the sky, and the "star of the earth" so to

speak embodies the myth of Asteria, falling star and fallen star, which has become earth. Where mortals see in Delos a "daughter of the sea" (a kenning for "island," since the word *nēsos* "island" is feminine in Greek), gods know its double nature, heavenly and earthly.[37] In another fragment, the same Pindar calls Delos Asteria:

Ex. 15. Pindar, Paean, *fr*. 52e, 39-42: "They obtained glorious Delos, since golden-hair Apollo granted them to inhabit Asteria's body."[38]

"Asteria's body" is a kenning for Delos, not specifically labelled "language of gods" but easily identifiable. There is a minimal phonetic figure in the alliteration of the initial [d] of *Dālos* (human name) and *demas* "body" (divine name), and a more complex one binding the divine name *Asteria* with the epithet of the human name, *erikudea* "glorious," which is symmetrical of the play between the human name, *Dēlos*/*Dālos*, and the epithet of the divine name, *tēlephanton*, in ex. 14. Here again we are dealing with a proper name. The opposition, as Watkins said, is between a neutral or unmarked term and a marked one: there is only one unmarked term, but there can be several marked ones, so that there may be several divine names, as is the case in Old Icelandic, or in the Sanskrit example for the names of the horse. Here we have two divine names for Delos, one of a simple type with the former name of the goddess ("Asteria's body" in ex. 15), one of a much more complex type ("the far shining star of the dark blue earth' in ex. 14). "Asteria's body," as a piece of divine language, can be understood either as the words of the poet or as an indirect speech reporting the very words of Apollo – and in that case we have a god speaking to men in the language of gods, which was never the case in Homer. And no wonder if the god involved is Apollo.

6. PYTHIAN ORACLES

As a matter of fact, there is a case in which the language of gods is used by gods but not labelled as such: I mean versified oracular predictions, supposed to be uttered by the god himself. This is pointed out by Dio Chrysostom (end of the 1st c.-2nd c. CE):

[37] In all versions of the myth Asteria was Leto's sister (Hesiod, *Theogony* 406-410). The use of the divine name is also for Pindar a way of alluding to the relationship between Leto and Asteria/Delos, which he does not mention explicitly, leaving it to his learned audience to restore the link.

[38] Pindar, *fr*. 52e, 39-42: […] ἐρικυδέα τ᾽ ἔσχον
Δᾶλον, ἐπεί σφιν Ἀπόλλων
δῶκεν ὁ χρυσοκόμας
Ἀστερίας δέμας οἰκεῖν.

Ex. 16. Dio Prusensis, *Oratio* 10.23: "What? Do you think Apollo would speak Attic or Doric? Or that gods use the same language as humans? In fact, the difference is as great as for the river Scamandros in Troy, which they call *Xanthos*, and they call *khalkis* the bird *kymindis*, and this place before the city, which Trojans called *Batieia*, the gods call the *burial mound of dancing Myrina*. And this is why oracular predictions are unclear and have deceived already so many."[39]

Notice that the Homeric examples are the same as those given by Plato in the *Cratylus*, which means that there was a canonical list used in schools. Dio alludes here to Delphic oracles in particular. The Pythia in Delphi gave oracles that were transcribed into verse by the priests of Apollo, and one of their basic principles is that things or people are not mentioned with their plain name, but alluded to through periphrases or metaphoric expressions. Oracular lines are an example of divine language, not labelled as such because self-evident. Poets can understand them, because the language of gods is that of poets, but ordinary men usually cannot (see Plato, *Alcibiades ii* 147b7-9 above). And Dio goes on saying:

Ex. 17. Dio Prusensis, *Oratio* 10.24: "Maybe Homer could go safely to Apollo in Delphi since he knew both languages […], but you, don't you fear that the god say one thing and you understand something else?"[40]

Pindar's formulation in ex. 15 is a reported Apollinian oracle, and "Asteria's body" should be taken as the words of the god. All the more so since the line containing Apollo's answer, the last line of the strophe, *Asterias demas*

[39] Dio Prusensis, *Oratio* 10.23: τί δέ; νομίζεις τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα ἀττικίζειν ἢ δωρίζειν; ἢ τὴν αὐτὴν εἶναι διάλεκτον ἀνθρώπων καὶ θεῶν; ἀλλὰ τοσοῦτον διαφέρει ὥστε τὸν ποταμὸν τὸν ἐν Τροίᾳ Σκάμανδρον παρ᾽ ἐκείνοις Ξάνθον καλεῖσθαι, καὶ τὴν κύμινδιν τὸ ὄρνεον χαλκίδα, καὶ τόπον τινὰ πρὸ τῆς πόλεως, ὃν οἱ Τρῶες ἐκάλουν Βατίειαν, τοὺς θεοὺς σῆμα Μυρίνης ὀνομάζειν. ὅθεν δὴ καὶ ἀσαφῆ τὰ τῶν χρησμῶν ἐστιν καὶ πολλοὺς ἤδη ἐξηπάτηκεν. J. VON ARNIM, *Dionis Prusaensis quem vocant Chrysostomum quae exstant omnia*, vols. 1-2, 2nd ed., Berlin: Weidmann, 1893–1896 (repr. 1962).

[40] Dio Prusensis, *Oratio* 10.24: Ὁμήρῳ μὲν οὖν ἀσφαλὲς ἦν ἴσως πορεύεσθαι παρὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω εἰς Δελφούς, ἅτε [διγλώττῳ] ἐπισταμένῳ τὰς φωνάς […] σὺ δὲ οὐ δέδοικας μὴ ἄλλα τοῦ θεοῦ λέγοντος ἄλλα διανοηθῇς; The problem of whether the wording of the oracle was Apollo's or the Pythia's was diversely solved. Dio makes as though the god himself were speaking. Plutarch, in a rationalising approach, has a different understanding (*De Pythiae oraculis* 7): "But as for us, Boëthus, even if these verses be inferior to Homer's, let us not believe that the god has composed them, but that he supplies the origin of the incitement, and then the prophetic priestesses are moved each in accordance with her natural faculties. Certainly, if it were necessary to write the oracles, instead of delivering them orally, I do not think that we should believe the handwriting to be the god's, and find fault with it because in beauty it fell short of that of the royal scribes. As a matter of fact, the voice is not that of a god, nor the utterance of it, nor the diction, nor the metre, but all these are the woman's; he puts into her mind only the visions, and creates a light in her soul in regard to the future; for inspiration is precisely this." W. SIEVEKING, *Plutarchi moralia*, vol. 3, Leipzig: Teubner, 1929 (repr. 1972). Transl. F. C. BABBITT, *Plutarchi Moralia* V, Cambridge: Harvard University Press (Loeb Classical Library), 1936.

oikeîn "to inhabit Asteria's body," is metrically the end of a dactylic hexameter, the metrical form in which oracles were formulated in Delphi. In the case of oracles, too, the device applies to nouns, see the famous oracle given to Athens during the second Persian war:

> **Ex. 18.** Herodotus 7.141: "Zeus of the large voice grants to Tritogeneia (that is, Athena) that a wooden wall alone will remain invincible, which will keep your children safe."[41]

The "wooden wall" (*xulinon teikhos*) means "the war ships:" the oracle relies on a kenning typical of divine language. In that case, Themistocles understood that "wooden wall" was a way of naming ships and relied on the navy to defeat the enemy at Salamis.

Similarly, another Delphic oracle (Herodotus 3.57) warns the Siphnians against a "wooden troop" (*xulinon lokhon*) and a "red herald" (*kēruka t' eruthron*): the latter is a double kenning for the ship on which the Samian ambassadors were to come, which was painted red. The ordinary noun is replaced by a metaphoric and periphrastic meaningful name, which reveals the real nature of things: *lokhos* means both "troop, detachment" and "trap," and in that case it will turn out that the troop is a trap. The similarity between the two kenningar for "ship," "wooden wall" for one's own navy and "wooden troop" for the enemy's navy, shows that the priests of Apollo were drawing from a repertoire of ready-made periphrases to compose their oracular lines. This constant use of periphrases or compounds in old Pythian versified oracles is underlined by Plutarch:

> **Ex. 19.** Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 406e7-10: "The god put an end to having his prophetic priestess call her own citizens 'fire-blazers,' the Spartans 'snake-devourers,' men 'mountain-roamers,' and rivers 'mountain-engorgers'"[42] (transl. Babbitt 1936).

Although he does not link it with the opposition between language of gods and language of men, Plutarch summarises here the essence of the former, for all those are descriptive compounds (kenningar) used as names: other parts of speech are not considered, language of gods is about naming, and oracular obscurity consists in not naming plainly things or people.

Of course the principle of replacing plain nouns by a metaphoric or periphrastic denomination, be it purely descriptive, carries with itself the risk of making the wording obscure. The tension between being first puzzled and then

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[41] Herodotus, *Historiae* 7.141: τεῖχος Τριτογενεῖ ξύλινον διδοῖ εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς μοῦνον ἀπόρθητον τελέθειν, τὸ σὲ τέκνα τ᾽ ὀνήσει. P.-E. LEGRAND, *Hérodote. Histoires*, Paris: Belles Lettres, 1932–1955.

[42] *De Pythiae oraculis* 406e7-10: ἀπέπαυσε δὲ τὴν Πυθίαν ὁ θεός 'πυρικάους' μὲν ὀνομάζουσαν τοὺς αὑτῆς πολίτας, 'ὀφιοβόρους' δὲ τοὺς Σπαρτιάτας, 'ὀρεᾶνας' δὲ τοὺς ἄνδρας, 'ὀρεμπότας' δὲ τοὺς ποταμούς. W. SIEVEKING, *Plutarchi moralia*, vol. 3, Leipzig: Teubner, 1929 (repr. 1972).

appreciating the formulation once it is decoded lies at the heart of that kind of poetry, but this demands learning and training and, as Dio Chrysostom says, for ordinary men this looks like aenigmas. This aenigmatic drift was fully exploited in oracular poetry. Most often the oracle is not properly understood until when fate is accomplished, and sometimes the god even has to give the explanation himself: a famous instance is that of the oracle uttered to the Lydian king Croesus that his empire would end when a mule (the animal, *hēmionos*) would become king of Media (Herodotus 1.55). After Croesus, dethroned by Cyrus, complained to Delphi that the oracle had lied, the priests had to explain the oracle (Herodotus 1.91). The mule turned out to be a metaphor for Cyrus, whose mother was a Mede of royal lineage, whereas his father was a Persian, a people submitted to the Medes at the time, therefore he was the equivalent of a mule born from a mare and a donkey. Here the device used is not a periphrasis but a metaphor, but it amounts to the same principle of substituting to the name of things or people a meaningful denomination which reveals the true nature of the referent.

The language of gods is intimately linked with poetry: the Pythian oracles, formulated in verse, are based on this type of metaphoric denomination rooted in the old technique of Indo-European poets, whence Apollo's epithet *Loxias* "the oblique one," according to the Greek tradition. Such is not the case for all oracles, and Plutarch underlines that the Pythia in the course of time stopped crafting versified answers for the oracles and came to deliver them in prose, with intelligible words (see ex. 19 above). In the oracular texts of Dodona, consisting mainly of the questions asked by men to Zeus, the god's answer is seldom written down, but when it is, it is in prose, and does not display anything like the language of gods – it consists most of the time in one word or two, but even in the case of a full sentence, it is in prose and uses normal names. As it is not poetry, it does not manipulate language. In another cult, not oracular but with a divine epiphany, when Asclepios, the god of medicine, appears in dream to his devotees during the practice of incubation in the sanctuary, he can talk to them. We have epigraphic accounts of that, dating back to the 4th c. BCE in Epidaurus, because miraculous healings were written down and exposed in the sanctuary: when his words are recorded in the form of direct speech, the god speaks in prose, and consequently he does not use language of gods but ordinary Doric Greek. Does that mean that we have no trace of this old conception in prose texts?

7. PLATO'S *CRATYLUS*

In a famous dialogue, Plato deals with language, staging two characters who advocate two opposite conceptions of language. On the one side, Hermogenes

contends that language is a matter of convention, and that there is no essential relationship between the form of a name and the characteristics of its referent. On the other side, Cratylus, a 5th c. BCE philosopher who was Plato's first teacher and gives his name to the dialogue, contends that there is indeed an essential relationship between the name and the nature of the referent, not a conventional one, and that the form of the name imitates the properties of the referent and is thus an image of the latter: "Representing by likeness the thing represented is absolutely and entirely superior to representation by chance signs" (*Crat*. 434a).[43] Cratylus' thesis is naturalist, Hermogenes' conventionalist.

This debate was an ongoing one in Greek philosophy. Now it is clear that the inherited opposition between human language and divine language conveys something similar to the debate at the heart of the *Cratylus*, and in Plato's dialogue Socrates duly quotes most of the instances form the *Iliad*. Divine language is the embodiment of the naturalist conception (not yet called thus) of a language where nouns used for naming things and people would be meaningful and motivated, whereas they are not in human language, and reveal the nature of the referent. Or rather, the Cratylic conception is an avatar of the old idea that in the language of gods names have those qualities – not only proper names,[44] but also common nouns, as shown by the *khalkis – kumindis* (ex. 3), the *thuōros* "(sacred) table," the shield and horse in Sanskrit (ex. 8 and 9), or the nouns listed in the Old Icelandic *Alvíssmál*. Such a language is closer to perfection than the human one because, to use a Platonic representation, the perceptual reality (the material form of a word) matches the conceptual reality (the meaning of the word).

The historical Cratylus, and Plato in this dialogue, went a step further and addressed the question of etymology. Socrates explains that names were origi-

[43] The dialogue ends in an aporia, no conclusion is drawn and no theory declared better. There is an endless literature disputing whether Plato is serious when he puts in Socrates' mouth all these etymologies or whether he is merely playing with a theory to which he does not subscribe. See for a survey of recent literature O. PETTERSSON, "The Legacy of Hermes: Deception and Dialectic in Plato's Cratylus," *Journal of Ancient Philosophy* 10 (2016): 26–58. This is not my point here.

[44] For proper names it has long been noted that most of them in Greek are semantically clear and are either nicknames describing the person (*Platōn* "the broad," which is a self-chosen name and not the real name of the philosopher) or compound names with a programmatic meaning supposed to predict what the person will be like, the name having a kind of magical power (*Aristoklês* "with an excellent glory," which was the real name of Plato); the compound name may be shortened in such a way that only the first element remains identifiable. Cratylus' conception has often been connected with that principle of name giving (see F. ADEMOLLO, *The* Cratylus *of Plato. A Commentary*, Cambridge University Press, 2011: 33–36) and the meaningful character of proper names. Similarly, many nouns are motivated, for instance compounds like *stratēgos* "general" is analysable in Greek as "army-leader." D. SEDLEY, *Plato's* Cratylus, Cambridge University Press, 2003: 36 assumes that compounds like *stratēgos* are the basis of the idea that other nouns too must be motivated, although their motivation was lost over time.

nally designed by a "name-giver" (*onomatoûrgos* "creator of names") who is identical with the legislator (*nomothetēs*), if not himself a divinity, at least someone closer to gods than men are, and possessed with a superior wisdom.[45] The name-giver assigned names according to his understanding of the nature of things, and the noun thus reflects the nature of the referent as the name-giver understood it. The understanding by the name-giver may have been right or wrong, what matters for etymology is that nouns or names were coined meaningful. Created motivated by the "name-giver," as they are in the language of gods of poetic tradition, nouns have been altered to become the words we use, losing their motivation in the process, and the aim of etymology is to get back to the original "true" meaning (*etumos* means "true"), reflecting what things really are. Pretty much as men in the cave can see only the shadows of the Ideas of the intelligible world outside the cave, they use nouns which are only a shadow of what names should be, and once were. The language of gods in older texts is not concerned with etymology, but, if taken seriously, the Cratylic etymological conception implies that human language is a degraded form of divine language, a language obeying the naturalist conception.

As we have seen, the language of gods is concerned with nouns, including proper names. Greek *onoma* means both "name" and in the grammatical meaning "noun." And as a matter of fact, the *Cratylus* starts with proper names (of men and gods), goes on with common nouns, but is not concerned with other parts of speech. The standard view is that *onoma* in the *Cratylus* means "word" in general and not specifically "noun" with its technical meaning,[46] but in fact all words analysed are nouns, either substantives by nature or substantivised other parts of speech, analysed only in so far as they are used as abstract nouns. Verbs are invoked as possible etymons, that is, in order to explain nouns used to name things, not as words to be analysed. For instance, *kiein* "to go" is not analysed, but is adduced only as the etymon of the abstract noun *kinēsis* "movement" (426c) – the verb *kineîn* "to move" is not mentioned, only the noun *kinēsis* is. Similarly, *sunienai* "to understand" is adduced only as the etymon of the abstract noun *sunesis* "understanding." Verbs are only exceptionally analysed *per se*, and when that is the case, as for *thallein* "to flourish" (414ab), the nominal form of the verb, the infinitive, is used. Here the sub-

[45] D. SEDLEY, *Plato's* Cratylus, 30.

[46] F. ADEMOLLO, *The* Cratylus *of Plato. A Commentary*, 1: "As for 'names,' the characters take a generous view: they count as ὀνόματα proper and common nouns, adjectives and verbs in infinitive (414ab, 426c) or participle (421c) mood. […] So it is standard, and doubtless right, to take it that in our dialogue the term ὄνομα generically applies to any word whose function is not primarily syntactic […] Indeed, the term ὄνομα is obviously connected with ὀνομάζειν 'to name', and so an ὄνομα is essentially a word that *names* or refers to something." See also a survey of the literature in O. PETTERSSON, "The Legacy of Hermes: Deception and Dialectic in Plato's Cratylus:" 28.

stantivised infinitive is used as the name of the abstract quality "thriving," in the absence of any corresponding abstract substantive, both *thalia* "sprout, abundance" and *thallos* "sprout" having a concrete more restricted meaning. That is, when there is an abstract noun with the same meaning as the verb, as for *kinēsis* next to *kineîn*, or *sunesis* next to *sunienai*, the noun is the *onoma* etymologised, not the verb; the infinitive, nominal form of the verb, is etymologised as the default abstract noun only when there is no corresponding substantive.

Adjectives, on the other hand, are analysed. But it is noteworthy that the adjectives etymologised in the *Cratylus* are not etymologised as such, but as substantivised neuters, names of an abstract quality (*to agathon* "the Good," *to dikaion* "the Fair," *to kalon* "the Beautiful," *to kakon* "the Evil," *to aiskhron* "the Ugly," *to terpnon* "the Pleasant," 412c *sqq*.). Whenever an abstract noun exists, the etymology is provided for the noun, not the adjective: for instance *deilia* "cowardice," not *deilos* "coward," *sophia* "wisdom," not *sophos* "wise," *kakia* "badness," not *kakos* "bad," *euphrosunē* "happiness," not *euphrōn* "happy." The adjectives analysed, like *agathon*, *dikaion*, *aiskhron*, *kalon*, do not have an abstract substantive next to them, or, rather, when there is a substantive, its meaning is more restricted than that of the adjective: for instance, the noun *aiskhos* means only "physical ugliness" in Classical Attic prose, and also "moral ugliness" in poetry, whereas the substantivised neuter *to aiskhron* means "shameful thing" or "shamefulness;" in the same way, the noun *kallos* means essentially "physical beauty," whereas the substantivised neuter *to kalon* means "the good, virtue;" the noun *dikē* means "justice," whereas the substantivised neuter *to dikaion* means "the Just." The reason for substantivising those adjectives in the philosophical vocabulary is precisely that this usually yields a more general meaning than that of the corresponding substantive. That is, the conditions are similar to what we saw for the infinitive: if there is no abstract noun matching exactly the meaning of the adjective, then a substantivised adjective is used. Those substantivised adjectives are treated as nouns and fall under the tag *onoma* "name, noun" – which in Greek is distinct from *lexis* "word."

The same applies to participles, which are neuter participles, substantivised and glossed by means of substantives: *to sumpheron* "the Useful," defined as "the motion (*phora*) of the soul in company with (*sum*-) the world" (417a), *to deon* "obligation" defined as "a bond (*desmos*) and hindrance of motion" (418e), *to on* "the being," coordinated with the substantive *ousia* "being, essence" (421b7-8, *to de on kai hē ousia*). Those also are etymologised as substantivised forms, used to name abstract qualities.

Of course etymological practice will end up dealing with all parts of speech, but in the *Cratylus*, the inquiry deals only with nouns, either substan-

tives properly said or substantivised other parts of speech which stand as a default form in the absence of a corresponding abstract substantive. The quest for motivation in the *Cratylus* continues the inherited idea that in an ideal language (the language of gods in poets' words) names, hence nouns which name things, should be motivated.

And the technique used to find out the motivation of nouns reminds of something familiar. For some nouns, Socrates provides an etymology which relies on a metaphoric denomination and appeals to a minor phonetic alteration, as for *daimōn* "divinity, god" which he derives from *daēmōn* "knowing" (398b), or for *hōrai* "seasons," which he derives from *horizein* "to delimit," as the seasons divide the winter from the summer (410c),[47] or for *gaia* "earth," which he derives from the Homeric perfect form *gegaasi* "they were born." Calling the earth "the birth-giver" and the seasons "the Delimiters," a metaphoric functional denomination, is not different from calling the moon "the Goer" (ex. 10) or the horse "the Runner" (ex. 9) or the ear "the Hearer" (Avestan). Calling the "body" (*sōma*) a "safe," a prison in which the soul is "kept" (*sōzetai*), is another metaphor which, as the others, reveals the true nature of the referent.[48] Assuming that *daimōn* "divinity" is a modified form of *daēmōn* "the knowing one" is not different from changing the human name *cárman-* "hide, leather shield" into a divine name *śarman-* "protection" (ex. 8), it relies on a minimal phonetic manipulation to make the noun meaningful. In its principle, the semantic relationship between the noun and the hypothesised etymon is identical with that between human and divine names in the poetic tradition. The difference is that what was conceived of as a synchronic relationship has been turned into a diachronic one, where the usual noun is seen as an altered form of the motivated original name. The possibility of alterations opens the door to a wide range of possible etymons.

Whenever there is no word ready-at-hand which could serve as an etymon, the parsing technique relies mainly on the assumption that the etymologised noun is a compound of what Socrates calls "primary nouns:" the etymology provided is thus a periphrasis which reveals the truth about the referent, in a way sometimes strikingly similar to the technique of kenningar. For instance, *zugon* "yoke" (pronounced [dzugon]) is derived from "draught-pair" (**duogon*, from *duo* "two" and *agō* "to lead, to drive"), which, indeed, could be eligible as a kenning for "yoke," if not under the form **duogon*. Similarly, one of the etymologies suggested for *hēlios* "sun" is that it "always rolls around the earth

[47] The author of the Derveni papyrus, a 5th c. BCE commentary on an Orphic cosmology, etymologises Ouranos from *horizein* as the one delimitating creation.

[48] This etymology, ascribed by Socrates to the Orphic tradition (400c), is a variant of the well-known metaphor of the body as the tomb of the soul (*sēma*) which comes from the Pythagorician tradition and is mentioned first by Socrates.

in his course" (*aei eilei iōn*):[49] "the ever-rolling" would also be a plausible kenning for the sun, which a poetic metaphor inherited from Proto-Indo-European calls "wheel of the sun."[50] A more complex etymology is that of *aithēr* "ether," parsed as "that which always runs around the air flowing" (*aei theî peri ton aera rheōn*), which refers to the cosmological conception according to which the air (*aēr*) is the lower part of the atmosphere, and above it stands the ether (*aithēr*).[51] The same device is applied to abstract nouns, for which, most of the time, the periphrasis can be understood only within the philosophical system to which it refers. For instance *to aiskhron* "the Ugly," derived from "always retaining the flow" (*aei iskhon rhoun*): the flow being the constant motion of the world, in the Heraclitean perspective claimed by Cratylus, anything which retains and hinders it is negative and harmful, disrupting the natural harmony, therefore is "ugly."[52] That implies that there can be different etymologies in different systems.

In other words, it seems that the etymological method used in the *Cratylus* is an offshoot of the old language of gods: it relies on metaphors, compounds and periphrases similar to the old kenningar, descriptive or functional, telling something about the nature of the referent. The innovation is that the very form of usual nouns is supposed to be accounted for through this technique, which was not the case in the traditional opposition: the kenning or the metaphor is created or selected such as to be able to account for the phonetic shape of the noun. This, however, could also have its roots in the poetic tradition. Instances in Greek, Sanskrit and Old Icelandic show that there was a tradition of binding the divine name and the human one through a phonetic figure (see 3.). Socrates' etymologies are kenningar or metaphors which are similarly constrained by their form since they must contain by and large the required phonemes found in the human name. Plato and/or Socrates was clearly familiar with this technique, as shown by the example of *Erôs*/*Pterôs* (ex. 11), and so were other 5th c. philosophers. The etymological technique appears to be in the first place the art of the poet, the art of finding an appropriate kenning or metaphor, that is, of creating a "divine" name, fitting both form and meaning. He who pos-

[49] Plato does not mention the uncontracted form *hāelios*, which is used in Doric poetry, but it is likely that *hāelios* is implicitly the starting point of this etymology *āei eilei iōn* > **aelion* (accusative). For another etymological proposal for "sun," Socrates starts from the Doric contracted form *hālios*.

[50] R. SCHMITT, *Dichtung und Dichtersprache in indogermanischer Zeit*, 166. The phrase is attested in Sanskrit, Greek, Germanic (Old English). In the *Alvíssmál* (str. 16), the sun is called *fagrahvél* "the fair wheel" by the elves, and *eygló* "ever-glowing" by the giants.

[51] Against Anaxagoras' etymology relating *aithēr* to *aithō* "to burn," which Plato does not mention – and which is correct by our modern standards.

[52] The etymology in that case amounts to a definition, see T. BAXTER, *The* Cratylus*. Plato's Critique of Naming*, Leiden: Brill, 1992, 72–74.

sesses this technique is able to identify the intention of the name-giver and to decode the motivation of the noun under examination. A full account of the phonetic shape of nouns may require more than two elements, as for *hēlios*, which "always rolls in its course" (*aei eilei iōn*), or *aithēr*, which "always runs around the air:" kenningar can consist of compounds, but also of longer phrases, see for instance the "tomb of the dancing Myrina" (ex. 4) and Pindar's examples (ex. 12-14), and that allowed for explanatory periphrases involving up to four words. The main difference is that, since the philosopher is not a poet, and since his aim is to decode the original naming process, using the tools of learned poets, he will not use compounds but develop the etymology in a full sentence.

8. Conclusion

The very old idea that gods speak a language characterised by the fact that nouns and names are motivated did not remain confined to poetry. The technique of poets who coined "divine" names next to usual nouns is not only reflected in the aenigmatic character of Pythian oracles, but inspired philosophers in an original enterprise: the Cratylic conception of etymology owes more to it, I think, than is acknowledged in most studies of the *Cratylus*, for both share the quest for motivation, but more interestingly, the etymological method used in the dialogue implies that the philosopher masters the poet's skills on that matter, and is himself able to create the right periphrasis or speaking metaphor, which he will not ascribe to gods but to a super-human name-giver of the past. The philosopher can decode the real meaning of a given noun because he is able to encode it first in an appropriate way. The difference between this conception and the old one is the introduction of diachrony, which allows to connect usual language (language of men) with the ideal truth-revealing language through the notion of alteration in the course of time. This implies that the ideal language cannot be identified as language of gods because anything really divine is not submitted to alteration. So that the opposition between language of men and language of gods, coexisting in different worlds at the same time, becomes an opposition between two states of human language, original and evolved, in the same world but at different times. This is the necessary condition allowing to bridge the gap. But the original language and the names given by our wise ancestors keep a flavour of their divine origin.

Abstract
The paper argues that the so-called "language of gods" of various Indo-European poetic traditions, as an ideal model of a language where names would be meaningful and transparent, inspired the etymological theories developed in Plato's *Cratylus*. Cratylus' etymological explanations rely on the techniques which poets use when they craft a "divine" name (metaphor, periphrasis, kenning, alliteration), which the priests of Apollo's shrine in Delphi also use in their versified oracles. In the *Cratylus* as in Pythian oracles and in the "language of gods," only names (Greek *onomata*) are submitted to that manipulation, other parts of speech are not concerned. Cratylus innovates in introducing a diachronic dimension: the actual names of things are a degraded form of the original, meaningful names, which are not labelled "divine" but were reputedly given by a super-human "name-giver."

GODS' SECRETARIES: ON PRESERVING ORACLES IN THE GREEK ORACULAR SHRINES DURING HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN TIMES

Manfred Lesgourgues*

On a very well-known kylix of the painter of Kodros, from the 5th century BCE,[1] is depicted the epitome of the Greek oracular consultation, or at least of the way Greeks wanted it to be depicted: two characters face each other, Themis acting as the Pythia and the King Aegeus as a consultant, in what would be a direct and oral way of communicating Apollo's words. This *image d'Épinal,* emphasizing the very moment of the divine revelation, has nonetheless been during a long time the tree hiding the forest: far from being limited to their acme, oracular rituals were a complex series of actions, both constructing ritually the conditions of a divine communication, and dealing with the communicated messages. They involved a great number of agents, whose role, largely underestimated and concealed in the ancient narratives, must be re-evaluated in order to fill some gaps in our understanding of the process,[2] as what is kept silent is often much more informative than more fixed cultural representations.

We know, for example, very little about the way consultants handled the oracles once they were delivered: many conjectures have been made in the Delphic case, from the praise of the excellent memory of men coming from an oral culture, to the evidence that someone inscribed them[3] – without really specifying who was doing it. This important prejudice about oral oracles is also what led Aslak Rostad[4] to see in the use of writing in the sanctuary of Abonoteichos a feature denouncing magic. More singularly, the idea that literacy, as Jack Goody[5] or Jocelyn Penny Small[6] have demonstrated, is a technology that evolved a lot during the time, and peculiarly in the Greek world, is almost

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[1] Red-figure Kylix, 440-430 BCE, Kodros Painter, Berlin F 2538.

[2] In a way, our work is inspired by the one of Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, who have shown that some of the agents of scientific practices were hidden in the narrative of the making of science. In order to understand the way oracles or scientific theories are fabricated, it is crucial to elucidate which part exactly every agents are taking in the process. B. LATOUR, S. WOOLGAR, *Laboratory Life: the Social Construction of Scientific Facts*, Berverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1979.

[3] G. ROUX, *Delphes, son oracle et ses dieux*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1976, 150.

[4] A. ROSTAD, "The Magician in the Temple: History and Parody in Lucian's Alexander," *Classica et Mediaevalia: Danish Journal of Philology and History* 62 (2012): 207–230.

[5] J. GOODY, *Pouvoirs et savoirs de l'écrit*, Paris: La Dispute, 1986.

[6] J. P. SMALL, *Wax Tablets of the Mind: Cognitive Studies of Memory and Literacy in Classical Antiquity,* London: Routledge, 1997.

never taken into consideration: oracular rituals are seen as essentially conservative, according to the Greek epigraphic formulation that they were performed κατὰ τὰ πατρία. However, when considering oracular sanctuaries outside of Delphi in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, an interesting title appears in our epigraphic documentation, the one of γραμματεύς, which means "secretary."

Occurrences of this title, or words related to it, appear throughout most of the documented Greek oracular shrines outside of Delphi, from Claros and Didyma to the Trophonion of Lebadea and the shrine of Abonoteichos**,** from the 2nd century BCE to the 2nd century CE. Nonetheless, maybe because the word *grammateus* seemed too obvious, for us, modern literate scholars, it has never been taken into consideration in a single study. Who were those Gods' secretaries? What were their prerogatives and role within the oracular shrines? And were they, as their political homologues, in charge of any oracular archival systems?

1. Γραμματεῖς: from the political agent to the sacred one

As in modern languages, the term γραμματεύς, "secretary," bears in Greek a misleading transparency: the difference between a school secretary and a Secretary of State shows well the wide range of positions that those professionals of writing and retrieval can occupy in contemporary society. The same diversity is to be expected in the Ancient times, even more when we know that the skills of literacy undergo intense innovations during the Classical and Hellenistic periods.

The best documented γραμματεῖς in the ancient times are political ones, and more specifically the Athenian ones. The *Suda*, in its definitions of the term, emphasizes the fact that *grammateis* were "*not in charge of any political action*," "πράξεως μὲν οὐδεμιᾶς ἦν κύριος," and were confined in "writing," "γράφειν" and "reading," "ἀναγνῶναι." But Aristotle gives us many more details about their prerogatives in his *Constitution of the Athenians*: secretaries – sometimes translated by "clerks" – were in charge of the debts' archives,[7] the state's archives and decrees, took note of the council decisions and made copies of the decrees.[8] Furthermore, far from being static, the range of their actions seems to have been in constant transformation during, at least, the fifth and fourth century BCE in Athens, as James P. Sickinger has shown in his book about *Public records and Archives in Classical Athens*: secretaries became more numerous with the apparition of cosecretaries and undersecretaries,

[7] Aristotle, *Constitution of the Athenians*, 47, 5 and 48, 1.
[8] Aristotle, *Constitution of the Athenians*, 54, 3-5.

ὑπογραμματεῖς,[9] and their interactions became more complex and specialized with the apparition of ἀντιγραφεῖς, copiers, and ἀναγραφεῖς, recorders.[10]

The fact that the acquisition of organized structures of archives was such a work in progress in the biggest city of the Classical era, leads us to cast a new light on our interrogations regarding the way oracles could have been preserved in far smaller institutions such as the oracular shrines. As we will see, it is very plausible that those practices and the part of *grammateus* were imitated from those political structures in the Hellenistic period. As a matter of fact, if we find political secretaries in Delphi in the classical period, such as the secretaries of the Council, of the Amphictyon,[11] of the treasurers,[12] of the temple-builders[13] or of the hieromnemons,[14] none of them seems to be related to religious matters.[15]

On the other hand, the agents we are taking under consideration are without any doubt linked to religious matters in oracular sanctuaries. The first attested inscription here considered, found in the Thessalian city of Demetrias and written around 116 BCE, sets some rules to guarantee good order, "εὐκοσμία," during the consultations of the very popular oracle of Apollo Koropaios.[16] A "γραμματεύς τοῦ θεοῦ," literally a secretary of the god, is mentioned twice[17] and even appears before the prophet of the god in the list of the agents summoned in the temple during the consultations, which confers him a great importance. This title knows only one parallel: in an honorific inscription in Didyma, another oracular shrine, in the first century BCE, Euandrides son of Akesonides is referred to as "γραμματεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ."[18]

If in those two examples the link between the secretary and the god is explicitly made, a lot of inscriptions in oracular shrines imply such a connection by inserting the title of *grammateus* within lists of unquestionably religious

[9] J. SICKINGER, *Public Records and Archives in Classical Athens*, Chapel Hill; London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999, 145–146.
[10] J. SICKINGER, *Public Records and Archives in Classical Athens*, 143.
[11] *FD* III, 2:86: "γραμματεὺς τῶν Ἀμφικτυῶν."
[12] *CID* 2:97: "γραμματεὺς τῶν ταμιῶν;" *CID* 2:93: "ὑπογραμματεὺς τῶν ταμιῶν."
[13] *CID* 2.75: "γραμματεὺς τῶν ναοποιῶν."
[14] P. M. FRAZER, "Two Hellenistic Inscriptions from Delphi," *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique,* 78 (1954): 62: "γραμματεὺς τῶν ἱερομνημονῶν."
[15] This does not mean that writings were not used in oracular practices: Dodona's *lamellae* show that questions could be addressed by writing, and the famous Mys' consultation pictured characters sent with the consultant to register the oracle he was given. *Cf.* É. LHOTE, *Les lamelles oraculaires de Dodone*, Genève: Droz, 2006; Herodotus, *Histories,* VIII, 135.
[16] L. ROBERT, "Sur l'oracle d'Apollon Koropaios," *Ellinika: filologiko, istoriko kai laografiko periodiko syngramma*, 5 (1948): 16–28.
[17] *IG* IX,2 1109, lines 21-22 and 32-33.
[18] Th. WIEGAND, A. REHM and R. HARDER, *Didyma. Zweiter Teil die Inschriften*, Berlin: G. Mann, n°416, l. 6-7.

officers. In two inscriptions of Didyma,[19] the secretaries, in the plural form, belong to a list mentioning the most sacred persons of the sanctuary, after the prophet, the *hydrophoros* (priestess of Artemis), the *hypochrèstès* (the help of the oracles), but before the group of the νεοκόροι, guardians of the temple. In Claros' *Delegations' memorials,* studied by Jean-Louis Ferrary, the presence of the secretary is quasi-systematic, after the mention of the priest of Apollo, the prophet and the thespiod (another agent of the revelation) from *c.* 105 to 176/7 CE.[20] The religious nature of this function is then unequivocal. Around 180/160 BCE, an honorific decree for Athenaios, son of Attalos, found in Claros, mentions also a group of secretaries within a list of sacred functionaries benefiting from sacrifices made for the *honorandus* in the sanctuary.[21] The appearance of the office in both sanctuaries seems then to be anchored in the Hellenistic period and it may be relevant to underline that both Ptolemaic and Attalid kingdoms, influent in Ionia at the time, were achieving great improvements in the archival techniques by developing their well-known libraries contemporarily. But oracles are not decrees, and shrines are not cities: what was then the function of a secretary in a Greek oracular shrine?

2. EPIGRAPHICAL *SILHOUETTE* OF THE ORACULAR SECRETARIES: CLAROS AND DIDYMA

No literary evidence casts a direct light onto the functions of the *secretaries* in the two shrines where their presence is the most attested: Didyma and Claros. Nevertheless, those inscriptions show some traits that help us understand the office.

First, the secretary was annually appointed in Claros during the Roman period:[22] Jean-Louis Ferrary has shown that iterations were possible (9 cases for 18 offices in 69 occurrences),[23] but were not the rule. The reason of this annual recruitment is not clear, and cannot be exactly compared with the democratic ground of those of civic secretaries, that is to avoid one's monopoly over a specific power, since priests and thespiods were in fact appointed for life in this sanctuary. This annual recruitment of an officer tends to make it a more honorific than technical charge, for people with technical skills such as archiv-

[19] D. MCCABE, M. PLUNKETT, *Didyma Inscriptions: Texts and List*, Princeton: Institute for Advanced Study, 1985, n°509, l.8 and 511 l.6-7.
[20] J.-L. FERRARY, *Les mémoriaux de délégations du sanctuaire oraculaire de Claros, d'après la documentation conservée dans le fonds Louis Robert*, Paris: De Boccard (Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres), 2014, 74–82.
[21] *SEG* LVI 1227.
[22] J.-L. FERRARY, *Les mémoriaux de délégations du sanctuaire oraculaire de Claros*, I, 83. For an analytic display of the different offices in each year, see 74–82.
[23] J.-L. FERRARY, *Les mémoriaux de délégations du sanctuaire oraculaire de Claros*, I, 91.

al ones may have not been numerous. We would then have to imagine that the continuity required by the archival work was most likely overseen by the life-appointed priests, or was taken on by subordinates linked to the sanctuary, such as the *neokoroi*. For example, in the oracular shrine of Amphiaraos in Oropos, in the Classical era, the *neokoros* was in charge of inscribing the names of the persons who were to follow the ritual of incubation.[24] The technicality or sacrality of the archival work was then not high enough to require a longer commitment from rare specialists.

Secondly, if in Claros the office was prestigious enough for the name of its holder to be inscribed, making him one of the eponymous officers of the sanctuary, this was not the case in the Hellenistic period in the same sanctuary or in Didyma, where γραμματεῖς were designated as an anonymous group. Two non-exclusive interpretations can be made of this fact: either the office became more and more important during the time, the secretaries acquiring unprecedented power and prestige, maybe because the control of the oracular archives was more important; or the shrine of Claros was more inclined to name them for they generally belong to the same family of the priest or prophet, as shown by Jean-Louis Ferrary.[25] But in both scenarios, the holding of the office became a bigger stake.

Thirdly, this office was time-consuming enough to require the presence of multiple people: as we've seen, the *grammateis* are referred to as an indistinct group in both Didymean inscriptions mentioning them, while there was only one prophet, one *hydrophoros* and one *hypochrestes*. In the Clarian decree for Athenaios, while there is only one prophet and one sacred herald, the secretaries but also the priests are mentioned as groups. In Roman Claros, the number of secretaries fluctuates between one and two: while in the first half of the second century, most of the years we knew of two secretaries, there is almost systematically a single secretary in the second half of the same century.[26] Nonetheless, it does not mean that this head-secretary didn't receive any help from subordinates. Even more, since the very badly known function of thespiod appears in those same years, maybe those years witnessed a shift of prerogatives,[27] some parts of the secretary office becoming holier and more stable: they would have been then attributed to the thespiod, appointed for life.

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[24] *LSG* 69.

[25] J.-L. FERRARY, *Les mémoriaux de délégations du sanctuaire oraculaire de Claros*, I, 92.

[26] J.-L. FERRARY, *Les mémoriaux de délégations du sanctuaire oraculaire de Claros*, I, 84–85.

[27] Maybe because the function of secretary has always been seen as « ancillary », I've never seen the hypothesis that the thespiod could have challenged the role of secretary, but almost always the role of prophet. And yet, we may understand much better the link between the inscription of the Smyrnean Chresmologos and the thespiodes, who are both referred to as ὑποφητὴς, by putting them closer to the archival prerogatives of the secretary. It would also explain the progressive disappearance of the mentions of secretaries in Claros and would reinforce the idea that oracular

Finally, we can wonder if this office was not part of an informal and sacred *cursus honorum* (undersecretary, secretary, prophet then priest or thespiod) within each sanctuary, as Jean-Louis Ferrary has suggested for Claros in the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE. Therefore, we have five mentions of ὑπογραμματεῖς, undersecretaries, in the corpus of Claros, three of which seeming to show an evolution from this charge to a more prestigious one: in the forty-sixth prytany of Apollo (*c.* 106 CE), Dionysos, son of Potamon, is "*hypogrammateus*," and he becomes *grammateus* in the forty-seventh prytany of Apollo; more interestingly, in the prytany of Titus Flavius Agathopous, Cneius Julius Capitolinus – maybe a Roman citizen from an elite family – is *hypogrammateus* under the supervision of Diognetos son of Andron, who was himself a prophet some years before. Jean-Louis Ferrary has suggested that this former prophet and secretary was back in charge in order to supervise the inexperienced undersecretary, who was related to a prophet of the god.[28] I also wonder if holding certain offices didn't require some kind of initiation,[29] since we know mysteries were performed in the sanctuary: that would explain why, even if he came from one of the finest Romanised families, a Clarian citizen couldn't be appointed as secretary out of the blur. On the other hand, this office was also a step to a higher position: some prophets were former secretaries.[30]

Those imperial practices could find a parallel in a Didymean inscription, where Euandrides son of Akesonides, referred to as "γραμματεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ," "secretary of the god," was honoured for having been in the past a pious treasurer, "ταμιεύσα[ντα εὐ]σεβῶς."[31] In this case, however, it would be the clerical training that would link the two positions, more than its honorific aspect: the secretaries were not often honoured by inscriptions in the sanctuary in contrast with the treasurers.[32] It is also worth observing that even though Euandrides is celebrated for his action as a treasurer, the title that identifies and distinguishes him in the inscription is the one of secretary. If we extrapolate from this isolated inscription, we could presume then that, in spite of their relative epigraphic discretion, the secretaries of the god seem to have been considered in Didyma

archives became more and more important during the second century. It could even have occurred definitively under the thespiod Tiberius Claudius Ardys, who was a former secretary and prophet, and under which the secretary function disappears from the memorials.

[28] Being prophet three times between the years 159/160 and 171/2 CE, Cneius Julius Capitolinus was a person of special importance and most likely the father of the undersecretary under consideration. J.-L. FERRARY, *Les mémoriaux de délégations du sanctuaire oraculaire de Claros*, 102.

[29] J.-L. FERRARY, *Les mémoriaux de délégations du sanctuaire oraculaire de Claros*, 122–131 and n° 36, 41, 64, 106, 154, 173, 174, 176, 248, 251, 293, 308.

[30] For example, J.-L. FERRARY, *Les mémoriaux de délégations du sanctuaire oraculaire de Claros*, 92–93.

[31] D. MCCABE, M. PLUNKETT, *Didyma Inscriptions: Texts and List*, n° 503.

[32] The Didymean corpus count thirty-six honorific inscriptions for treasurers. D. MCCABE, M. PLUNKETT, *Didyma Inscriptions: Texts and List*, n° 501-536.

of a higher distinction than the treasurers, and may have to demonstrate their financial skill before joining the clerks' office.

Annual, holy, absorbing and career-oriented: those are the main features of the secretary's office in oracular shrines. This documentation, however gives us little information about their relationship to divine speeches. The only hint epigraphic evidence offers for Didyma is the existence, in the 2nd century BCE of a χρησμογραφίον, a place where oracles were recorded, that is used as a referential point in the description of the construction-work of the temple.[33] But since this place has not been excavated, we can only speculate on its shape, exact place and function.[34] The secretaries would in this way be linked to an archival process concerning the oracles.

3. THREE CLUES ON THEIR FUNCTIONS

If we do not have any more information in most of the sanctuaries where this function of *grammateus* is attested, some sources give us some clues about what their prerogatives could have been regarding divine speeches.

3.1. *Demetrias: organising information and consultants' flows*

In the only evidence left concerning the existence of the oracle of Apollo Koropaios, near Demetrias, that we've mentioned earlier, stands the only partial explanation of what the γραμματεῦς τοῦ θεοῦ, secretary of the god, was doing. As Louis Robert has well shown, this decree concerns measures guaranteeing the good order, "εὐκοσμία," of the consultation, and it refers a lot to the *god's secretary*. It appears from the main formulation of the decree that, even though the *grammateus* does not belong to the eponymous magistrates, he has been already given functions in the ritual long before the adoption of the text, by contrast with the "ῥαβδοῦχοι," "the rod-bearers," established by it. Although he's mentioned at the end of the list of the temple officials, he precedes

[33] D. MCCABE, M. PLUNKETT, *Didyma Inscriptions: Texts and List*, n° 107 and 108.

[34] O. RAYET, A. THOMAS, *Milet et le Golfe Latmique*, Paris: Baudry, 1885, 57; B. HAUSSOULLIER, *Didymes, fouilles de 1895 et 1896*, Paris: Leroux, 1904, 94; *id*. "Comment avait lieu la consultation de l'oracle?," *Revue de Philologie, de Littérature et d'Histoire anciennes*, 44 (1920): 253–254; Th. WIEGAND, "Bericht über die Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen zu Milet und Didyma," *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 49 (1924): 20; Th. WIEGAND, H. KNACKFUSS, *Didyma, I: Die Baubeschreibung*, Berlin: Mann, 1941, 154. Th. WIEGAND, *Didyma, II: Die Inschriften*, Berlin: Mann, 1958, 156; K. TUCHELT, *Vorarbeiten zu einer Topographie von Didyma. Eine Untersuchung der inschriftlichen und archäologischen Zeugnisse*, Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1973, 50 and 77; J. FONTENROSE, *Didyma: Apollo's oracle, cult and companions*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, 43; A. LAMPINEN, "Θεῷ μεμελημένε Φοίβῳ: Oracular Functionaries at Claros and Didyma in the Imperial Period," in *Studies in Ancient Oracles and Divination*, M. Kajava (ed.), Roma: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 2013, 77.

the προφήτης, prophet, which may be seen as an unexpected mark of precedence and importance of the charge. Since his function existed before the decree, his core occupations remained implicit.

However, the new responsibilities of the secretary conferred by this decree inform us about the kind of actions he was responsible for. First, he lists the names of those who wanted to consult the oracle; thus he builds a list[35] on a white board that he well then make public in front of the temple;[36] he calls the consultants one by one and handles their absence by reorganising the passage order according to the list; he escorts and introduces the consultant into the temple.[37] All these actions, that are quite complex when handled ritually by a single agent are outstanding, for they are less connected to the acts of writing and recording, than to manipulation skills of information and individuals. The fact that those prerogatives lie with the secretary outlined competences that are more of an archival nature than of a scribal one.

But far from being simply an educated gate-keeper, it seems that the secretary then joins the other officials of the oracle, listed before, "οἱ προγεγ<ρ>αμμένοι," in proper clothes and pure state, in order to receive the tablets, "πινακία," where consultants wrote their questions to the god. The actions, as the verbs show, are here collegial: they receive the tablets and, after an ellipse corresponding to the revelation ritual, they seal in jars tablets where answers are inscribed[38] and let the consultants spend the night in the sanctuary ("ἐν τῶι ἱερῶι").[39] We may imagine that the secretary was during these operations in charge of anything related to writing, but it's a mere hypothesis.

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[35] The idea of construction rather than of recording is due to the fact he has to deal with cases of *promantia*, that is the right to consult an oracle before other groups of consultants, granted to cities or individuals.

[36] *IG* IX,2 1109, l. 32-35: "ὁ γραμματεὺς/ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀποδεξάσθω ἐξαυτῆς τὰς ἀπογραφὰς τῶν βουλομένων/ χρηστηριασθῆναι καὶ πάντα {ς} ἀναγράψας τὰ ὀνόματα εἰς λεύκωμα, παραχρῆμα προθέτω τὸ λεύκωμα πρὸ τοῦ ναοῦ," "the god's secretary will construct immediately the list of those who want to consult the oracle, and after he has written all the names on a white board, will at once display the white board in front of the temple."

[37] *IG* IX,2 1109, l. 35-38: "εἰσαγέτω κατὰ/ τὸ ἑξῆς ἑκάστης ἀναγραφῆς ἀνακαλούμενος, εἰ μή τισιν συγ/κεχώρηται πρώτοις εἰσιέναι· ἐὰν δὲ ὁ ἀνακληθεὶς μὴ παρῇ, τὸν/ ἐχόμενον εἰσαγέτω, ἕως ἂν παραγένηται ὁ ἀνακληθείς·", "[the secretary] will introduce [the consultants] into the temple according to the order of each list, unless some people have been granted the right to get in first; if the person called is not present, he will introduce the next one, until the person called shows up."

[38] As Louis Robert underlined, we cannot know if those tablets were the same than the one with the questions on them. L. ROBERT, "Sur l'oracle d'Apollon Koropaios," 24.

[39] *IG* IX,2 1109, l. 38-45: "καθήσθω/σαν δὲ οἱ προγεγ<ρ>αμμένοι ἐν τῶι ἱερῶι κοσμίως ἐν ἐσθῆσιν λαμ/πραῖς, ἐστεφανωμένοι στεφάνοις δαφνίνοις, ἀγνεύοντες/ καὶ νήφοντες καὶ ἀποδεχόμενοι τὰ πινάκια παρὰ τῶν μαν/τευομένων· ὅταν δὲ συντελεσθῇ τὸ μαντεῖον, ἐμβαλόν/τες εἰς ἀγγεῖον κατασφραγισάσθωσαν τῇ τε τῶν στρα/τηγῶν καὶ νομοφυλάκων σφραγῖδι, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τῆι τοῦ ἱερέως καὶ ἐάτωσαν μένειν ἐν τῶι ἱερῶι," "the aforementioned will stand in the sanctuary observing the *decorum* of the situation, in splendid garments, crowned by laurels, pure and sober, re-

The return of the third singular person line 46 designates again, in an explicit way, the secretary of the god: after the night, he's the one bringing back the jars – he seems to have looked after them and be responsible for them – and after showing that the seals are still there, he breaks them and give the answers back, following the register he has created earlier.[40] Here, again, the different actions are far more connected to the manipulation and organisation of information in an archival way than to writing. But the fact he guarantees the seals' integrity confers him also the responsibility of the authenticity of the divine speech.

Being the guardian of this authenticity and the handler of the lists, the God's secretary appears here more like a specialist of the manipulation of information than of writing.

3.2. *Abonoteichos & Trophonios: manipulating content and display of oracles*

These features are paralleled in a much later and much controversial literary source, the *Alexander or the False Prophet* by Lucian. In this satire, the man from Samosate allegedly unveiled the manipulations of written oracles that the prophet Alexander, founder of the oracular cult of Glykon, would have performed. In this sanctuary, the questions addressed to the god were indeed written on a papyrus[41] that was then sealed and handed to the prophet, who gave back, the next day, the same papyrus with the answer written on it. If we put aside the biased and malevolent look Lucian cast upon this cult, we can recognize a rite very similar from the one taking place in Demetrias, except that, this time, it is the prophet who is in charge of manipulating names and archives. Maybe because the charges traditionally devoted to the secretary were seen as more strategic and honorific in the 2nd century BCE have we here an absorption of them by the prominent figure of this sanctuary, that is the prophet. We could interpret the rise of the thespiod and the fall of the secretaries in Claros' inscriptions in a similar way.

But Alexander is not the only person manipulating the written oracles according to Lucian, since several agents were to help him in his task: he mentions, without further explanations, an "ὑπογραφεύς," a "clerk," an "ἐπισφρα-

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ceiving the tablets of those consulting the oracle. When the oracular session is over, they'll throw them into an urn and will seal it with the seal of the *strategoi*, the *nomophylakes* and of the priest, and will let the consultants stay in the sanctuary."

[40] *IG* IX,2 1109, l. 46-45: "ἅμα δὲ τῆι ἡ/μέραι ὁ γραμματεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ προσενέγκας τὸ ἀγγεῖον καὶ ἐ/πιδείξας τοῖς προειρημένοις τὰς σφραγῖδας ἀνοιξάτω καὶ ἐ/κ τῆς ἀναγραφῆς ἀνακαλῶν ἑκάστοις ἀποδιδότω τὰ πινά/[κια]," "At dawn, the secretary of the god will bring the urn, show it to the aforementioned and remove the seals. He will call the people accordingly to the list and give them back the tablets."

[41] Lucian, *Alexander the False Prophet*, 19.

γιστής," "a seal bearer," and a "χρησμοφύλαξ,"[42] "a keeper of oracles", whose job was to help the prophet in his manipulations, and also maybe in the good keeping of annals, "ὑπομνήματα."[43] If it hadn't been for the satirical accumulation effect of the names on the payroll of the sanctuary, those subaltern functions may have never been exposed, for their holders were too humble. From this implicit presence of assistants, we can hypothesize that the secretary's charge could then have been, in other oracular sanctuaries, much more of a supervision charge than a technical one, which would explain the fact it could be given annually.

This idea of the presence of anonymous subordinates is comforted by another parallel in the Trophonion sanctuary in Lebadea, Boeotia. Pausanias describes, in the second century CE, the mantic ritual who took place in this holy place: after a series of ritual preparations, the consultant of the oracle entered a mysterious cave where he had direct visions of the god. Disoriented after this mystic encounter, he was then questioned while sitting on the throne of Memory about his experience by priests. Finally:

> ἀνάγκη σφᾶς, ὁπόσα ἤκουσεν ἕκαστος ἢ εἶδεν, ἀναθεῖναι γεγραμμένα ἐν πίνακι.
> Obligation is made for them of consecrating on a wooden-tablet a writing of what each of them has heard or seen.[44]

If in this formula Pausanias emphasizes the fact that consultants themselves had to consecrate an account of their experience, the neutral plural passive form of "γεγραμμένα," rather than a masculine plural active form "γεγραφότες," seems to imply that they might not have been the ones inscribing them. Of course, this silence raises more questions than it gives solutions: did Pausanias, since he never uses the word, consider the function of secretary too unimportant or too obvious to mention it? Were people devoted to this task, such humble agents, as for example sacred slaves, that it wouldn't have occurred to Pausanias to mention them? We don't know. The only certain point is that those *ex-votos*, written systematically and on perishable materials, formed a large amount of narrative which display in the sanctuary or filing in the archives may have required someone more important than an anonymous person to organize them.[45]

As a matter of fact, it would be naive to consider that those archives were not considered as of strategic importance, in their content and display, as it is

[42] Lucian, *Alexander the False Prophet*, 19.
[43] Lucian, *Alexander the False Prophet*, 27.
[44] Pausanias, *Description of Greece,* IX, 39, 14.
[45] Those perishable archives may have been compiled in stone inscriptions, such as in therapeutic sanctuaries: P. SINEUX, "Les récits de rêve dans les sanctuaires guérisseurs du monde grec: des textes sous contrôle," *Sociétés & représentations* 7 (2007): 45–65, 49.

clear in both sanctuaries. The enquiry the consultants of Trophonios were subjected to by the priests, in a moment of confusion, served a double purpose: the ministers of the gods may have been eager to know the divine will, but they were also shaping by their questions the memories of the confused devotee and the subsequent narrative of his experience.[46] Even with the earnest intentions, those reports of visions must have obeyed traditional patterns and be subjected to a normative control, such as the ones the Asklepieian healing stories followed as has shown Pierre Sineux.[47] Priests and secretaries were, in Bruno Latour's words, more mediators than intermediaries, since they had an action on the content that couldn't be systematically predicted[48] from the vision form it had beforehand: their part was not only to record and pass on set words of the god – as intermediaries do in Latour's theory – but they shaped the consultant report into a narrative that became by this operation a suitable oracle – as mediators. Nonetheless this operation does not seem to have been pinpointed by the consultants.

But the manipulation of the content could also be of an opportunist nature. Lucian reports the prophet Alexander altered Glykon's prophecies when they were proved incorrect. After having predicted a victory over the Armenians to Severianus and acknowledged his defeat:

> τοῦτον μὲν τὸν χρησμὸν ἐξαιρεῖ ἐκ τῶν ὑπομνημάτων, ἐντίθησιν δ' ἄλλον ἀντ' αὐτοῦ[49].
>
> [Alexander] withdraws this oracle from the archives, and puts another in its place.[50]

This need to amend the oracles' record implies former oracles could have been consulted by other persons than the consultant after they were emitted, since in this case Severianus had ended his life after his defeat.[51] Lucian adds on the following chapter that this practice was not limited to the prophecies made to famous generals, but were also used in the case of inaccurate predictions made to sick people. The manipulation of oracles' archives seems then to have been peculiarly sensitive since the predictions were recorded in them before they were fulfilled and Alexander may have been helped in this task by

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[46] P. BONNECHERE, *Trophonios de Lébadée. Cultes et mythes d'une cité béotienne au miroir de la mentalité antique*, Leiden: Brill (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World), 2003, 250–253.

[47] P. SINEUX, "Les récits de rêve dans les sanctuaires guérisseurs du monde grec: des textes sous contrôle:" 49.

[48] On mediators and intermediaries: B. LATOUR, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, New York: Oxford University Press (Clarendon Lectures in Management Studies), 2005, 58–59.

[49] Lucian, *Alexander the False Prophet,* 27.

[50] Translation of the author.

[51] On Severianus: Cassius Dio, *History of Rome*, 71, 2; Lucian, *How to Write History*, 21.

the subordinates we've seen earlier. When this kind of incident happened in other oracular shrines, one may think that the revision of some contents was part of the secretary's attributions.

The supervision of the archive content was also linked to the display of the oracles' reports consecrated in the sanctuary and their diffusion outside of the holy place. Pausanias seems to imply that the tablets, where the visual and auditive experience of the consultants in the Trophonion in Lebadea were recorded, were exhibited among other offerings since:

> λείπεται δ' ἔτι καὶ τοῦ Ἀριστομένους ἐνταῦθα ἡ ἀσπίς[52]
> Aristomenes' shield is also displayed there.

We can imagine that their display was not arbitrary: the most ancient or vivid reports must have been put forward in order to emphasize the power of the god and the antiquity of the cult, whereas the most damaged or irrelevant ones were discarded. Within the boundaries of the sanctuary, those prerogatives may have been attributed to the secretary of the god.

In a close but slightly different way, we see that god's secretaries in oracular shrine could use their manipulation skills in order to control the content and display of the god's words within the sanctuary. Once again, the writing part of the office seems to be much less important than the ability of managing and organising information.

3.3. *Argos: from a secretary to another*

Two other inscriptions, found in the oracular sanctuary of Apollon Pythaeus in Argos, cast an interesting light on the sacred secretaries.[53] Dated respectively from the 3rd and the 1st century BCE, they mention a couple of "γροφέε," secretaries, side by side with other religious functionaries such as "προμάντιες," prophets, or a "ἱερευς," a priest, leaving no doubt about the religious aspect of their office.

The first inscription is a dedicatory one, were the two prophets and the two secretaries offer Apollo a series of construction works they've conducted in the sanctuary. Neither the priest, nor the prophetess are mentioned here. A great part of the actions undertaken were related to the circulation and accesses in the sanctuary and concerns colonnades ("τὰν περίσταίν"), path ("ὁδὸν"), walls encircling the altar ("τοῖχον πέτρινον πὰρ τοῦ βωμοῦ") or doors of the temple ("τὰνς θύρανς τοῦ ναοῦ"), reinforcing the idea that god's secretaries were in

[52] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, IX, 39, 14.
[53] *SEG* XVII 146 and *Syll.*[3] 735. On these oracles, see: Pausanias, *Description of Greece,* II, 24 and M. PIÉRART, "Un oracle d'Apollon à Argos," *Kernos. Revue internationale et pluridisciplinaire de religion grecque antique* 3 (1990): 319–333.

charge of the consultant's flow, as in Demetrias. The fact that they consecrate also two collection boxes ("θηαυρόν") for the cult taxes ("τοῖς πελανοῖς") implies that they were in charge of collecting them, and maybe of keeping a record of it as in the Amphiaraion of Oropos. Finally, it seems revealing that one of their action consists in reorganising and putting in order the altars and statues of the shrine ("τὸνς βωμὸνς ἐνς τάξιν πεδάγαγον"). More than toward scribing assignments, the inscription points toward organisation and flow control tasks in the beginning of the third century BCE.

Two centuries later, around 92/1 BCE,[54] the sacred secretaries reappear in our documentation in an inscription recording an oracle given to the Messenians about the Andanian mysteries. In a vivid contrast, the eponymous magistrate of the text, who was the secretary of the Council ("γραμματεύς τῶν συνέδρων"), is referred to in a non-dialectal way, whereas the sacred secretaries keep their title in Doric dialect ("γροφεῖς"). Moreover, the inscription informs us of the political decision of engraving ("ἀνέγραφη") the verse of the oracle, according to a decision of the *archontes* and the Council ("κατὰ τὸ ψάφισμα τῶν ἀρχόντων καὶ τῶν συνέδρων"). The mere fact that a city, Argos, was able to transcribe word for word an oracle given to another political entity, the Messenians, implies that this revelation had been previously recorded by the religious institution, and most likely by its secretaries, and was transferred from a sacred secretary to a political one – and maybe from a perishable support to a more enduring one. The list of the sacred agents given by the inscription would then also be there to sanction and give more credit to the transcription of the god's words: the oracle was endorsed not only by the human agents who ritually participated to utter it, but also by those who collected and registered it, the secretaries.

Those Argian inscriptions endorse then both the ideas that gods' secretaries were in charge of recording and transmitting the oracles uttered by Apollo, but also collaborated with the prophets in controlling the sacred space and the consultants' flow in it.

3.4. *Claros: was the Smyrnian Chresmologue an archive specialist?*

These facts lead us to finally consider another epigraphic inscription from the Clarian sanctuary, an honorary decree for a Smyrnian chresmologue from the beginning of the 2nd century BCE.[55] For having achieved a good "direction" of the oracle, "προστασία τοῦ μαντείου," Menophilos, son of Philetairos, from

[54] *SEG* LIV 434.

[55] *SEG* XLVI, 1065. L. and J. ROBERT, "Décret de Colophon pour un chresmologue de Smyrne appelé à diriger l'oracle de Claros," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 116 (1992): 279–291.

Smyrna, introduced as a chresmologue, "ὁ χρησμολόγος," earned the honor to be crowned during the Great Claria festival as hypophet of the god, "τὸν ὑποφήτην τοῦ θ[εοῦ]." First mention of an oracular official in Claros, this decree seems to insert itself in a context of refoundation of the oracle related to some epiphanies of Apollo some years before in the sanctuary.[56] In this situation, the use of uncommon terms such as *chresmologos* and *hypophet* appears highly meaningful, especially when the terminology of the oracles' agent used in Roman times appears in another decree a decade or so later in Claros.[57] Everything is pointing towards the idea that Menophilos' direction of the oracle was a way to shape its oracular ritual, using his experience as a *chresmologue* to help support the apparition of the god's words, as an hypophet – literally "the one supporting the god's utterance." Since chresmologues were independent diviners collecting oracles given by oracular sanctuaries or famous seers and interpreting these personal archives in order to predict the future,[58] one may deduce that Menophilos implemented his archival skills in the Clarian ritual and that the god's secretaries managed some kind of archive in the sanctuary afterwards. The evidence here is certainly circumstantial, but since it's the only trace of a collaboration between a non-institutional diviner and an oracular institution, in a time when other oracles began to mention secretaries in their rank, this interpretation would not be strange and would be endorsed by all the previous examined examples.

Paradoxically, then, all the documents informing us about what secretaries were doing at oracular sanctuaries point to the fact that the function was much more one of supervision of archival work than one of mere writing.

4. Conclusion

Of course, the scarcity of the evidence, combined with the lack of a clear and explicit literary text explaining us what role secretaries were playing in oracular sanctuaries, gives our reconstruction a very hypothetical turn.

Nonetheless, all our sources seem to converge towards the idea that god's secretaries shared more than a mere part of an *amanuensis* and were supposed

[56] *SEG* XXXIII 973 and also Chr. Müller, Fr. Prost, "Un décret du *koinon* des Ioniens trouvé à Claros," *Chiron: Mitteilungen der Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 43 (2013): 93–126.
[57] *SEG* LVI 1227.
[58] On *chresmologoi:* A. Shapiro, "Oracle-mongers in Peisistratid Athens," *Kernos: revue internationale et pluridisciplinaire de religion grecque antique* 3 (1990): 335–345; J. Dillery, "Chresmologues and manteis: Independent Diviners and the Problem of Authority," in *Mantikê: Studies in Ancient Divination*, S. I. Johnston, P. Struck (eds), Leiden: Brill (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World), 2005, 167–231; M. Flowers, *The Seer in Ancient Greece*, Berkeley: University of California, 2008, 60–66.

to manage a team of lower-rank technicians, a pledge of continuity when the secretary's charge was often annual. The oracles were not only to be written, they were also to be preserved and retrieved when necessary, in order to give the sanctuaries the power to mobilize this divine knowledge, for its own promotion or more political collaborations. This function is then the most reliable piece of evidence for the existence of archives in Greek oracular sanctuaries, which have often been implied by the presence of an oracles' collection, such as the one Gorgos of Claros compiled.[59] It would also particularly well fit the idea that Roman Imperial power tried to control this kind of knowledge, as would reveal the massive destruction of prophetic books by Augustus.[60]

Finally, a diachronic dynamic, that may have paralleled retrieval and literacy progresses, seems to emerge from those pieces of evidence: after a Classical era where the part of secretary may have been shaped by the political institutions of the city, secretaries may have joined oracular sanctuaries in the Hellenistic times, first as anonymous specialists accompanying the rise of the new sanctuaries, as in Didyma, then as honoured agents controlling a growing stock of divine speeches, as in Claros. The fact that the title appeared during the 3rd and 2nd century BCE in Argos, Claros, Didyma and Demetrias is most likely more than a mere coincidence and matches an important series of oracles' renewal in the same period. Eventually, those prerogatives may have been considered important enough to be conflated, in a more or less extended way, with lifelong priesthood, such as those of prophet in Abonoteichos or thespiod in Claros, and carried more and more honours to their carrier. Unfortunately, those sacred archives may have had too much authority not to challenge the secular authority of the emperor and the spiritual one of the Christian church, leading to its own disappearance: for having been the keepers of the god's memory, his archives and secretaries fell to a partial oblivion.

Abstract

The orality of oracles in oracular shrines is a well-known feature of Greek divination, peculiarly discussed by Plutarch in his *Pythic dialogues* (*De Pythiae oraculis*, 402D-405D; *De defectu oraculorum*, 431A-438D), revolving around inspiration and versification. When one reads those dialogues, one might think that the words of the Gods were limited to an oral performance that was not recorded, but by some historians searching for striking *exempla*. The "wax tablets of the mind" would have been enough to remember them. Nonetheless,

[59] J.-L. FERRARY, *Les mémoriaux de délégations du sanctuaire oraculaire de Claros*, 83.

[60] Suetonius, *The Twelve Cesars,* XXXI. The fact that the predictions destroyed were "*nullis vel parum idoneis auctoribus*," "with no or no proper authors," imply that some came from authorized institutions and were thus not destroyed.

this vision of a punctual oral revelation is challenged by a growing number of written pieces of evidence in the Hellenistic and Roman times: most of the flourishing oracular shrines took very seriously the act of writing down the gods' words. At Claros, the *mémoriaux de délégation* as Louis Robert and Jean-Louis Ferrary called them, mentioned systematically a γραμματεύς, a secretary; there was in Didyma a special place where to write the oracles, the *Chresmographeion*; and after each revelation given by Trophonios, in Lebadeia, the content of the latter was carefully reported over *pinakes* that were as archives of the past revelations. What I intend to do in this paper is to question this trend of preserving in an institutional way a written record of the god's words: contrary to Aslak Rostad's point of view, who sees in the use of writing in the sanctuary of Abonoteichos a feature denouncing magic, I think that, in the first centuries C.E., the multiplication of institutionalized ways of recording oracles shows a new interest in their control and diffusion. By comparing the sacred functions and processes of recording the oracles in the oracular shrines, my aim is to ask how writing god's words became a strategy of controlling a peculiar kind of knowledge: oracles.

DIVINE SIGNS IN ANCIENT ROME
OR HOW TO PUT THE VOICE OF THE GODS INTO WORDS

Romain Loriol*

1. INTRODUCTION

In ancient Rome, divination was the essential instrument of the dialogue with the gods, in the public as well as in the private practice. Far from being a simple expression of credulity, or, conversely, the hollow shell of a formal ritualism, the belief in divine signs has a rational nature. It is clearly shown by the existence in Rome of priests who were experts in different sorts of divination and, more generally speaking, by the existence of an extremely elaborate divinatory lore. For example, the art of the *augures*, the Roman public priests whose concern was the interpretation of the signs coming from birds; the Etruscan knowledge of the *haruspices*, who dealt with prodigies, lightning strikes and hepatoscopy; or, in the private sphere, a variety of specialized diviners, like astrologers and dream interpreters.[1] But this rationality is discernible in another field which has, up to now, not or only partially been explored: tales of signs, or signs narratives, that is to say the very factual and brief account of the event considered as a sign by the Romans. A considerable bulk of prodigies was recorded by Roman priests and/or historians in such a dry form – for example, here is an account for the year 166 BCE issued from the late imperial compilation of Iulius Obsequens (an *epitomator* who accurately collected the prodigies recorded in the books of Livy):

> Iulius Obsequens, 12: *In colle Quirinali sanguis terra manavit. Lanuvii fax in caelo nocte conspecta. Fulmine pleraque discussa Cassini et sol per aliquot horas noctis visus. Teani Sidicini puer cum quattuor manibus et totidem pedibus natus*.
> On the Quirinal hill blood drenched the earth. At Lanuvium a torch was seen in the night sky. Many places at Cassinum were shattered by lightning and the sun was seen at night for some hours. At Teanum Sidicinum a boy with four hands and the same number of feet was born.[2]

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[1] The bibliography on Roman divination is enormous. See for example V. ROSENBERGER, *Gezähmte Götter: Das Prodigienwesen der römischen Republik*, Heidelberg: F. Steiner, 1998; D. ENGELS, *Das römische Vorzeichenwesen (753-27 v.Chr.): Quellen, Terminologie, Kommentar, historische Entwicklung*, Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2007.

[2] The texts and (sometimes slightly modified) translations are those of the Loeb editions.

Plenty of these narratives can be found in the ancient literary sources. They appear as factual and plain descriptions, only sometimes and rather rarely accompanied by a commentary or an interpretation of their potential meaning. This is probably why they are usually perceived as a very raw testimony of ancient belief, which would deserve less consideration than the explicit content of the prophecies, predictions and verbal *omina*. Nevertheless, signs narratives are much more than a narrative content: they *mediate*, in several ways, the divine message.

A sign is not the event itself, but the divine value and meaning people are ready to grant to a particular event. Thus, an event cannot be recognized or interpreted as a sign unless it has been verbalized. Of course, we can admit that one could observe a strange phenomenon and by himself acknowledge from its features that it has a divine origin; but, as a social, collective content, a sign exists only as a narrative. Since a sign is always put into words, the stances of a senator in Rome confronted with a prodigy heralded from a little city in Italy, of a priest listening someone's dream account, and of an ancient (or modern) reader vis-à-vis a sign which he reads or hears about, are more or less similar: they all recognize and interpret a sign from its verbal translation. It implies that the divinatory hermeneutics are in a large part linguistic or discursive ones, and that we can, as modern readers, infer from the shape of these sign narratives several features of the Roman divinatory thought itself. It is a path I have explored in great detail elsewhere,[3] and this paper deals with one particular aspect of it, the wording of a sign. By focusing on a speech pronounced by Cicero in the Roman senate around 56 BCE, entitled *On the Response of the haruspices*, I would like to show that the wording of a divine sign is a complex process, consisting of three hardly distinguishable operations: description, pre-interpretation and persuasion.

2. The wording as description

Whoever puts a sign into words is supposed to describe precisely the event and its circumstances, because the reader-interpreter relies on them to evaluate whether the phenomenon was a sign or not, and to speculate on its meaning. In the speech entitled "On the response of the soothsayers," Cicero reports the response of the haruspices, who have been asked by the Roman senate to explain a recent prodigy. In the following text, Cicero quotes the presumably official[4] response of the Etruscan experts (in capitals), then makes a personal

[3] See R. Loriol, *Lire et écrire les signes divins à Rome*, Rome: EFR, *forthcoming*.

[4] On this problem (is Cicero's testimony reliable or not?), and for a more comprehensive discussion about the role and the functions of the priestly response, see M. Beard, "Cicero's *Response of the haruspices* and the Voice of the Gods," *JRS* 102 (2012): 20–39 and A. Corbeill, "The

paraphrase of it (in bold letters):

> Cic., *Har.*, 20: *Adhibete animos, et mentis uestras, non solum auris, ad haruspicum uocem admouete: QUOD IN AGRO LATINIENSI AUDITUS EST STREPITUS CUM FREMITU. Mitto haruspices, mitto illam ueterem ab ipsis dis immortalibus, ut hominum fama est, Etruriae traditam disciplinam: nos nonne haruspices esse possumus?* ***Exauditus in agro propinquo et suburbano est strepitus quidam reconditus et horribilis fremitus armorum***.
>
> Give me your attention and apply your minds, and not your ears alone, to this sentence in the pronouncement of the haruspices: IN AS MUCH AS A RUMBLING AND A NOISE HAVE BEEN HEARD IN THE LATIN LAND. I will dispense with the haruspices, I will dispense with the lore which, as the rumor has it, was committed to Etruria by the immortal gods; for cannot we ourselves be our own haruspices? **In the immediate outskirts of the city, there has been heard a hidden/subterranean rumbling and a terrifying noise of arms**.

The formulation of the haruspices can be seen as a legal-sounding summary of the event, narrowly focusing on its most important features: the location (*in agro latiniensi*, thus in the Roman area of religious competence), the phenomenon itself (*strepitus cum fremitu*: "rumbling with clattering," two different noises, whose origins have not been clearly identified, as we could infer from the passive form *auditus est*). Through his paraphrase, Cicero intended to clarify this "hyper-condensed" wording by adding several relevant circumstances: *in agro propinquo et suburbano* depicts the location in a less legal and more concrete fashion than the *agro latiniensi*, highlighting that the prodigy happened in the immediate neighborhood of Rome; the *strepitus* was seemingly a "hidden" or "deep-under-the-ground" rumbling, *reconditus*; the *fremitus* was moreover *horribilis*, that is "very frightening;" and finally it has become a *fremitus armorum*: it implies that the witnesses have probably described the noise as a rumbling with clinking, evoking something like an army marching in the country. Then, in this new wording, the divine nature of the event is much clearer than in the official response: it was not only two rare sounds, but a very strange, terrifying and so close to Rome combination of noises. The same observation can be made at the interpretative level: it is much easier to build an analogical exegesis on the base of Cicero's sentence: for example, *reconditus* "underground" lets the audience suppose that the goddess *Tellus*, the Earth, was probably affected; and the *arma* suggest that the Romans were threatened by an *armed* enemy. It is very likely that Cicero did not forge these details, because he was speaking in front of people who could verify them all.

Function of a Divinely Inspired Text in Cicero's *De haruspicum responsis*," in *Form and Function in Roman Oratory*, D. Berry, A. Erskine (eds), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 139–154.

I shall explain later why Cicero has developed the wording with so much care, but I would like to draw a first step conclusion: we clearly see in this comparison that the description of a prodigious event is not *the description of the sign*, but the *building of it*, since it determines its degrees of reliability and interpretability. This is the reason why we can hardly study a sign without considering carefully its wording.

3. The wording as pre-interpretation or translation

But the wording of a sign is not only the more or less detailed description that makes the sign clear. It consists also often, in the same time, in translating it or pre-interpreting it. By selecting the circumstances he mentions in his account, the author orientates in a certain manner the reception: the more abundant are the details revealing a divine intention (according to the criteria of the ancient Romans),[5] the more reliable is the sign – and *uice uersa*. But the choice of the words too directly influences the way the event is perceived and understood. This could be an obvious statement: language is mediation, thus describing is always interpreting; but because seers and priests used specific names and technical categories we are no more familiar with, it seems particularly important. In the *Histories* of Tacitus, a Roman writer of the beginning of the second century CE, Fabius Valens, a general of the emperor Vitellius, observed an "augurium" during the year of the Four Emperors, in 69 CE:

> Tac., *H.*, 1, 62, 3: *Laetum augurium Fabio Valenti exercituique quem in bellum agebat, ipso profectionis die aquila leni meatu, prout agmen incederet, uelut dux uiae praeuolauit.*
> It was a happy augur to the mind of Fabius Valens and the army which he was leading to war that, on the very day they started, an eagle flew gently along before the advancing army apparently to guide their march.

On can easily seize why the omen is favourable: the eagle, the bird of Jupiter and the emblem of the legion, is guiding steadily the army, indicating thereby the protection of the god and announcing a presumable victory. Here, the interpretation of the sign is even included in the narrative with the explicit comparison *uelut dux uiae*. But I would like to focus on two subtle elements which could appear at the first sight as merely descriptive. The eagle is "flying soflty" (*leni meatu*). *Meatus* is the word used by the augurs to designate the flight of the birds they observe during the official rite of the *auspicatio*. The *lenis meatus* is the opposite of the *turbidus meatus* ("troubled flight").[6] Thus,

[5] See R. Loriol, *Lire et écrire les signes divins à Rome*.
[6] Ammianus Marcellinus, *History*, 21, 1, 9.

by classifying the *meatus* as *lenis* or *turbidus*, the augurs not only looked at the meaning of the flight, a good vs. a bad meaning, but also evaluated the quality of the medium. Nothing sure, indeed, could be deduced from the observation of a confused and troubled bird. Therefore, even a Roman with a basic knowledge in divination would probably infer from the expression *leni meatu* that the sign was perfectly clear, *i.e.* of a very good quality. The other interesting element is the verb *praeuolare*, which literally means "to fly ahead," but also refers, in an implicit way, to the ancient auspicial category of *praepetes* birds, that is to say, the birds whose "flights ahead" were considered as a favorable sign.[7] It is unclear which species the word *praepes* actually designated, neither do we know what exactly "to fly ahead" meant originally,[8] but, in any case, it is very likely that the readers of Tacitus, unlike us, were sensitive to the divinatory connotation of the verb and subsequently of its positive meaning.

Let us turn back to the speech of Cicero, and more precisely, in the text we have quoted, to the word *strepitus*. Once again, it seems to be a very neutral name. But we find in the *Historia naturalis* of Pliny the Elder the following statement about the sacrifice: "every time the prayer opening the sacrifice has been disturbed by dire noises" (*quotiens dirae obstrepentes nocuerint*),[9] the sacrifice is not agreed by the gods. The word *ob-strepentes* appears here as a religious category, the "noises disturbing the sacrifice." Even if this word has a more precise meaning than *strepitus* (because of the preverb *ob-*, that means "against" or "disturbing"), it is difficult not to consider that the word *strepitus*, used in a very similar religious official context, did not convey a similar meaning. And we could add that the word "strepitus" itself appears regularly in narratives, in order to precisely describe prodigies that were officially recorded by the Roman priests: thus, for example, in the *History* of Livy, for the year 204 BCE:

> Liv., 29, 14, 3: *In aede Iunonis Sospitae Lanuui cum horrendo fragore* ***strepitum*** *editum.*
> In the temple of Juno Sospita at Lanuvium a noise was heard with a dreadful crash.

The similarity of this account with the Ciceronian *strepitus cum fremitu* is rather striking. So, the mere fact of talking about *strepitus*, whatever the (real) nature of the sound might be, immediately shapes the event as a divine and negative sign.

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[7] Aulus Gellius (quoting Hyginus), *Attic Nights*, 7, 6, 3 and 7, 6, 8; Servius, *Commentary on the Aeneid of Virgil*, 6, 15.

[8] See C. KOCH, "Praepes," *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* XXII, 2 (1954): col. 1558–1559; J. LINDERSKI, "The Augural Law," *ANRW* 2, 16, 3 (1986): 2279, footnote 531.

[9] Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 28, 11.

We can observe an interesting discrepancy that faces whoever puts a sign into words: on one hand, he is supposed to make efforts to give a clear, detailed and neutral account of the prodigious event, in order to correctly report the indirect message of the gods. But, at the same time, these efforts are counterbalanced by a natural trend of pre-interpretation, that consists in reducing the variety of circumstances to a selected set of useful elements, and in using already-interpreted categories and labels.

4. The wording as persuasion

The translation or pre-interpretation I have just depicted is an "objective" or "technical" one, since it is a tool used for grasping the meaning of the sign with more efficiency; but this tool can of course be used by witnesses, interpreters or authors as a subtle mean of persuasion, in order to orientate the sign, under the appearance of impartiality, toward the interpretation that would be convenient for them. We know that the Romans regularly tried to turn a sign to their advantage and that there were different interpretations "competing" for the same sign or prophecy. But here the matter is not the interpretation itself, but how the wording of a sign influences a potential interpretation.

Once again, we could come back to the speech of Cicero. To sum up briefly the case, the haruspices had declared in an official but rather vague response that the prodigy was linked to several impieties committed against the gods.[10] The purpose of Cicero was to place the responsibility of these impieties upon his main political adversary, Clodius (who himself had accused Cicero, in an earlier speech, to have triggered the divine wrath by an impiety). The strategy he adopted consisted thus in suggesting that the details of the prodigy accurately mirrored the impious acts of Clodius himself. To observe this, we have to keep in mind the response of the haruspices and its presumably "objective" rewording by Cicero:

> Cic., *Har.*, 20:
> *QUOD IN AGRO LATINIENSI AUDITUS EST STREPITUS CUM FREMITU.*
> *Exauditus in agro propinquo et suburbano est strepitus quidam reconditus et horribilis fremitus armorum.*

In the speech of Cicero, Clodius has much to do with the idea of "secrecy:" Cicero alludes to the "secret and hidden" undertakings of Clodius,[11] and a little

[10] Cicero, *Response of the haruspices*, 9, 20, 21, 34, 36 et 37. See B. POULLE, "Les conseils des haruspices pour les prodiges de 56 av. J.-C.," *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* 17, Supp. 17 (2017): 183–193.

[11] Cicero, *Response of the haruspices*, 55: *quae sunt occultiora* [*consilia*] *quam eius* (*i.e.* Clodius)? ("What designs can be more secret than his?")

earlier to the "occult ceremony or sacrifice" of the goddess Bona Dea, which had been polluted by Clodius.[12] So we could suspect that the addition of *reconditus* in the account of Cicero, which precisely means "hidden, obscure," is not without a personal motive. We can go further: in this speech, the orator reminds his audience many times of the fact that Clodius was a gang leader, whose personal ambitions threatened the *res publica* of Rome, and the word *arma* appears three times in relation with Clodius, symbolizing his dangerous ambitions.[13] Cicero channels cleverly the reader's mind in seeing a close link between this leitmotiv of Clodius' *arma* and the "fremitus *armorum*" he added to the official wording. Then comes the last, but maybe the most striking example of this strategy: among the impieties the haruspices have talked about, there were *ludos pollutos*, which means "polluted religious games." For Cicero, there is no doubt: the polluted games are those of a goddess, Magna Mater, in April 56, because they were disturbed by the intrusion of a group of violent slaves sent by Clodius.[14] The goal of Cicero is thus to establish that the prodigy was a message sent by the outraged goddess, in order to prove that the responsible of the impiety was Clodius.

> Cic., *Har*., 23-24: (…) *dubitabimus quos ille fremitus nuntiet ludos esse pollutos? Ac si uolumus ea quae de quoque deo nobis tradita sunt recordari, hanc Matrem Magnam, cuius ludi uiolati, polluti, paene ad caedem et ad funus ciuitatis conuersi sunt, hanc, inquam, accepimus agros et nemora cum quodam strepitu fremituque peragrare.*
> (…) shall we have any doubt what games are those which this noise declares to have been desecrated? Further, if we will only call to mind the traditions we have received concerning our several deities, we shall surely remember to have heard that this Great Mother, whose games have been polluted, desecrated, and even made an occasion of massacre and fatality to the community, yes, that even she walks abroad through our fields and woods to the accompaniment of strange murmurs and rumblings.

What are, Cicero asks, the traditional features of Magna Mater in the Roman tradition?[15] A *particular* rumbling with clattering *in the country* or *in the fields*. Here, Cicero exploited two other elements of his wording to emphasize the similarity between the noises of the procession of Magna Mater, and those of the prodigy: the plural *agros* refers to *ager* not as "territory, land" but in a non-technical meaning, "country, field," precisely as in the *agro propinquo et suburbano* of Cicero; we also understand that the word *quidam*, a "certain,

[12] Cicero, *Response of the haruspices*, 37: *quod sacrificium tam occultum quam id* (of Bona Dea)… ("what sacrifice is so secret as that which…")
[13] Cicero, *Response of the haruspices*, 6: *armatum*; 38: *arma*; 58: *armauit*.
[14] Cicero, *Response of the haruspices*, 22.
[15] For a detailed (mythological) depiction of the goddess and her procession, see Catullus, *Poems*, 63, v. 74-84 (for a brief comparison with Cicero, see J. O. LENAGHAN, *A Commentary of Cicero's Oration* De haruspicum responso, La Hague-Paris: Mouton, 1969, 120).

particular" noise, has been added on purpose to create a formal similarity between the *strepitus* of the prodigy and the one of Magna Mater. Through all these echoes, Cicero led the public to infer *by himself* from the text he hears or reads how accurately the details of the prodigy matched with the personality and the impious acts of Clodius, and the key of this powerful strategy of persuasion is the at first sight unnecessary paraphrase of the official response. This example is, in my opinion, all the more interesting that it offers a rare glimpse on the attempts of an author to change or distort the sign narrative in order to influence the interpretation of his audience.

5. Conclusion

The wording of a sign is an overlapping of three potential strata – the objective description, the divinatory pre-interpretation, the persuasive distortion. It is common to consider that in religious matter the mere fact to seek persuasion would reflect a cynical opinion or a lack of belief, and this seems to be all the more so with Cicero that he uses the prodigy for attacking his personal enemy. But Cicero maybe thought that he was not distorting anything, but that he was on the contrary giving a correct, or even a corrected translation of what the gods had intended to signify. This is precisely what Cicero suggests: the voice of the haruspices was *not* the voice of the gods.[16] In the Roman society neither dogma nor a clergy existed; there was no strict doctrine about the nature of the gods and how they were supposed to intervene in the human world. So the haruspices, however skilled they could be, did not embody the gods, nor officially represent their voice; what is more, every Roman citizen could possibly and legitimately propose a different, and perhaps better, oral or written wording of the sign: "cannot we ourselves be our own haruspices?," asked Cicero (*nos nonne haruspices esse possumus?*). It is the reason why the narrative mediation of a divine sign should not be considered neither as a dry record of the reality, nor as a formal manipulation by a small elite of priests or seers, but as an always multi-layered and uncertain process, that any Roman individual could challenge.

Abstract
In ancient Rome, divination was the essential instrument of the dialogue with the gods, and a considerable bulk of prodigies and signs was recorded by Roman historians. But these records appear as very factual and plain descriptions, rarely accompanied by a commentary or an interpretation of the prodigies. This

[16] See M. Beard, "Cicero's *Response of the haruspices* and the Voice of the Gods:" 27–32.

is probably why they are usually perceived as a very raw testimony of ancient belief, which would deserve less consideration than the explicit content of the prophecies and predictions. Nevertheless, signs narratives are much more than a narrative content: they mediate the divine message, determining thereby its degree of reliability and its meaning. By focusing in this paper on a speech pronounced by Cicero in the Roman senate around 56 BCE, *On the Response of the haruspices*, I would like to show that the wording of a divine sign is fundamentally a complex and challenging process, consisting of three hardly distinguishable operations: description, pre-interpretation and persuasion.

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